Divine Inspirations

Edited by
DAVID D. HARNISH *and*
ANNE K. RASMUSSEN

Music & Islam in Indonesia

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Music and Islam in Indonesia

CO-EDITORS
DAVID D. HARNISH
ANNE K. RASMUSSEN

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The editors, however, would like to take this opportunity to thank those immediately helpful in the realization of this book. Most prominently, this includes our authors. We were thrilled to assemble such a wonderful group of scholars, each of whom responded with such good cheer to our frequent requests during the many stages of the project. We also thank the memberships of our professional societies, the Society for Ethnomusicology and the International Council for Traditional Music, who have welcomed several of our panels on this and related topics. Enthusiastic response to our initial forays into the world of Islam in Indonesia in the conference setting was what gave us the impetus to turn our scholarly exchange into a published volume. We know that this collection represents only a selection of possible case studies on music and Islam in Indonesia and look forward to the contributions of other colleagues to this dynamic and developing field of inquiry.

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University, for converting author Franki Notosudirjo's jpeg file of a score into Sibelius format for our use in the volume.

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About the Companion Website

www.oup.com/us/divineinspirations

Oxford University Press has constructed a password-protected, companion website for *Divine Inspirations: Music and Islam in Indonesia*. We recommend that readers visit the site for additional graphics, including video clips, and web resources central to our topic of music and Islam in Indonesia. Not all authors supplied additional graphics, but the vast majority of us have suggested several web resources specific to our chapters. Please note that websites come and go and that even URLs can change. Our recommendations for various web resources could yield other interesting results, and we encourage readers to conduct their own searches, particularly on YouTube using the key terms and names that you find in our chapters. We will be updating the material on the website periodically and welcome both recommendations and feedback.

You may access the Website with username Music2 and password Book4416.

A Note On Spelling

One of the major challenges for any volume attempting to present research for Indonesia as a whole is the myriad spellings of words in regional, Indian-derived, and Arabic languages. Spellings are rarely standardized within the institutions and disciplines of the country; scholars may have various approaches to spellings, and the Indonesianized versions of transliterated Arabic and Sanskrit are inconsistent. The editors unified many core terms, for example,

"Qur'an," throughout the volume. But, alternate spellings for some terms, for example "dhalang," appear in some chapters to represent local practice; for instance, this word is also spelled "dalang." The editors advise readers to refer to the glossary to peruse the way in which many crucial words appear in the volume.

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Notes on Contributors

Judith Becker, professor emeritus of ethnomusicology at the University of Michigan, is former director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies and co-founder and first director of the Center for World Performance Studies at the University of Michigan. She is author of three books: *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion, and Trancing* (2004; recipient of the Society for Ethnomusicology's Alan Merriam award), *Gamelan Stories*: *Tantrism, Islam and Aesthetics in Central Java* (1993), and *Traditional Music in Modern Java* (1980). She has also written numerous articles for such publications as *The Galpin Society Journal*, *Ethnomusicology*, *Journal of Music Theory*, *Journal of Musicological Research*, *The World of Music*, *Asian Music*, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *The New Grove Handbook of Ethnomusicology*, *The New Grove Handbook of World Music*, *Leonardo Music Journal* and *The Musical Quarterly*. In addition, she is editor of *Art, Ritual and Society in Indonesia* (1979) and the three-volume set of translations entitled *Karawitan: Source Readings in Javanese Gamelan and Vocal Music* (1984, 1986, 1987). Becker has received awards from the Society for Ethnomusicology, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Smithsonian Institute, the Social Science Research Council, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Fulbright Foundation. She was the first recipient of Michigan's John D'Arms Award for graduate student mentorship and in 2001 was awarded the Glenn McGeoch Collegiate Professorship of Music by the School of Music. Her current research focuses on the relationships between music, emotion, and ecstasy in institutionalized religious contexts and in secular contexts. She is exploring the common ground between humanistic, cultural, anthropological approaches and scientific, cognitive, psychological approaches.

Birgit Berg completed her Ph.D. dissertation titled "The Music of Arabs, the Sound of Islam: Hadrami ethnic and religious presence in Indonesia" at Brown University in 2007. Her dissertation explored the cultural traditions of Arab descendents in Indonesia and also analyzed the role of Arab culture in popular Indonesian Islamic arts. Her dissertation research was sponsored by a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Award (DDRA), a grant from the Watson Institute for International Studies, and a Blakemore Freeman Language Study Fellowship. Berg has also conducted research on national forms of Christian music in Indonesia (the topic of her M.A. thesis at Smith College), as well as on traditional arts in the Indonesian regions of Gorontalo, Manado/Minahasa, and Sangihe-Talaud. Upon completing her dissertation, Birgit Berg was named a 2007 Presidential Management Fellow and began a two-year fellowship in Washington, D.C. with Voice of America broadcasting's East Asia division.

Charles Capwell retired from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2007 after 30 years on the faculty of the School of Music. He is a former editor of *Ethnomusicology* and has conducted fieldwork in India and Indonesia as a Fulbright Scholar. In Indonesia, his work has also been supported by the Asian Cultural Council, the Freeman Foundation (through the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies, University of Illinois), and the Hewlett Foundation (through the Office of International Programs and Studies, University of Illinois). His focus there has been on musical expressions of popular Islam ranging from traditionally inspired forms like *gambus* and *qasidah* to more contemporary and commercially mediated types like *dangdut* and the more individual expressions of groups like Bimbo and Debu.

Matthew Isaac Cohen is senior lecturer in the Department of Drama and Theatre, Royal Holloway, University of London. He has published widely in the field of Indonesian culture, with special interests in popular theatre, intercultural performance, *wayang*, and the arts of Cirebon. His book, The *Komedie Stamboel: Popular Theater in Colonial Indonesia, 1891–1903*, co-published by Ohio University Press and KITLV Press, won the 2008 Benda Prize from the Association for Asian Studies. He is also a practicing *dhalang*, with a certificate in puppetry from Ganasidi, Indonesia's national puppetry organization, and has performed internationally in Europe, Asia, and the United States.

David D. Harnish (Ph.D. UCLA, M.A. U- Hawai'i) is professor of ethnomusicology, co-director of Balinese gamelan Kusuma Sari, and associate dean in the College of Musical Arts at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. He is author of *Bridges to the Ancestors: Music, Myth, and Cultural Politics at an Indonesian Festival*

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R. Franki S. Notosudirdjo (a.k.a. Franki Raden) is an Indonesian composer-ethnomusicologist. He studied composition with Chou Wen-chung and Stephen Demsbki, and received his MM (1990) and Ph.D. (2001) in ethnomusicology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. From 1975 on, he has been active as a cultural critic publishing articles on arts and culture in Indonesia's most prestigious periodicals. From 2006 to the present, he teaches at the Visual and Performing Arts, Department of Humanities, University of Toronto, Canada. He is also a secretary of The Sacred Bridge Foundation, a cultural foundation he founded with Serrano Sianturi in 1997 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Uwe U. Pätzold teaches ethnomusicology at Robert Schumann University of Music, Duesseldorf, Germany. He completed his M.A. in 1992 and his PhD in 1998 at the University of Cologne. He has taught ethnomusicology and new media-related matters in ethno-sciences at the Universities of Cologne and Bonn. Pätzold conducted field research in West and Central Java, West Sumatra, and Bali. His research interests include the culture and arts related to the

Indonesian movement and self-defense art *Pencak Silat*, representations of ethnic music and movement arts within the new media, and borderline projects between contemporary and ethnic performing arts. His publications include *Blüte, Frucht und Kern. Bewegungsformen und Musikstile im Bereich des Pencak Silat in West-Java und West-Sumatra* [Blossom, Fruit, and Kernel. Movement Forms and Music Styles of the Pencak Silat in West Java and West Sumatra] (Holos-Verlag 2000). For his further publications see the BMS / German RILM Online catalogue at www.musikbibliographie.de, search words: *uwe p*tzold*.

Anne K. Rasmussen is associate professor of music and ethnomusicology at The College of William and Mary, where she also directs the William and Mary Middle Eastern Music Ensemble. Rasmussen has published widely on American musical multiculturalism, music and culture in the Middle East, and Islamic musical arts in Indonesia. She is contributing co-editor of *Musics of Multicultural America* (Schirmer 1997), and her articles appear in the journals *Ethnomusicology, Asian Music, Popular Music, American Music*, the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, *The World of Music*, and the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, and she has contributed chapters to a number of edited volumes. She has also produced four compact disc recordings documenting immigrant and community music in the United States. Rasmussen's book *Women, the Recited Qur'an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia* based on nearly two years of ethnographic research in Indonesia was published in 2010 by the University of California Press. She is a former Fulbright senior scholar, has served as the first vice president of the *Society for Ethnomusicology*, and is the recipient of a Phi Beta Kappa award and a university professorship for excellence in teaching; she is also a recipient of the Jaap Kunst Prize for the best article published in the field of ethnomusicology.

Sumarsam is an adjunct professor of music at Wesleyan University, who directs the gamelan program and teaches Indonesian music performance, history, and theory. He holds an MA in music from Wesleyan University and a Ph.D. from Cornell University. He is the author of several articles on gamelan and *wayang* in English and Indonesian publications. His book *Gamelan: Cultural Interaction and Musical Development in Central Java* was published by the University of Chicago Press in 1995 (Pustaka Pelajar Press of Yogyakarta published its Indonesian version in 2003). As a gamelan musician and a keen amateur *dhalang* of Javanese *wayang kulit*, he performs, conducts workshops, and lectures throughout the world.

Wim van Zanten graduated in theoretical physics and taught mathematics at the University of Malawi (1967-1971), where he also investigated the music of southern Malawi. From 1971 to 2007 he taught anthropology of music and

statistics and data theory for the social sciences at the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University, the Netherlands. His research since 1976 has been mainly concerned with music of West Java, Indonesia. Presently, he is preparing a second book on Tembang Sunda Cianjuran music and a book on the music of the Baduy minority group. These books will include audio and video documentation. van Zanten is also vice-president of the International Council for Traditional Music, and he has been involved in activities concerning the UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. See also http://www.xs4all.nl/~wvzant27/.

Andrew N. Weintraub is associate professor of music at the University of Pittsburgh, where he teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in ethnomusicology and popular music and directs the University of Pittsburgh gamelan program. He is the author of *Power Plays: Wayang Golek Puppet Theater of West Java* (Ohio University Press, 2004), and co-editor of *Music and Cultural Rights* (University of Illinois Press, 2009). His most recent book is titled *Dangdut Stories: A Social and Musical History of Indonesia's most Popular Music* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

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Divine Inspirations

Figure 1.1. Map of Indonesia

N
W
E
S
Luzon
PHILIPPINES
Manila
Mindoro
PACIFIC OCEAN
Samar
Panay
Palawan
Negros
Philippine Sea
Sulu Sea
PALAU
Koror
Palau Islands
Mindanao
Celebes Sea
Manado
GORONTALO
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Halmahera
Sofifi
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Molucca Sea
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Palu
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Sulawesi
(Celebes)
CENTRAL SULAWESI
MOLUCCAS
Jayapura
Ceram
Buru
Ambon
PAPUA
NEW GUINEA
Kendari
Makassar
MALUKU
SOUTH SULAWESI
SULAWESI TENGGARA
Banda Sea
Kepulauan Aru
Wetar
Kepulauan Tanimbar
Sumbawa
Alor
Babar
Flores
Dili
EAST TIMOR
EAST NUSA TENGGARA
Timor
Arafura Sea
Sumba
Roti
Kupang
Timor Sea
Sawu
LESSER SUNDA ISLANDS
Gulf of Carpentaria
Darwin
Ashmore and Cartier slands (AUSTRALIA)
Birdum
AUSTRALIA

Introduction

The World of Islam in the Music of Indonesia

David D. Harnish and Anne K. Rasmussen

In large cities and small villages, a traveler to Indonesia today will notice the Islamic aspects of Indonesian culture more readily than the courtly arts traditions that are celebrated internationally in museums and concert series or the spectacular rites of passage and trance dancing that form part of the canon of anthropologists and scholars of world religions. Documented brilliantly throughout the 20th century by such leading world scholars as Jaap Kunst, Margaret Mead, Claire Holt, Clifford Geertz, and Colin McPhee, attention to the courtly arts and exotic rituals of this vast archipelago has been overshadowed in the 21st century by a concern with the political and social energy of the country's prominent religion, Islam. More than just a recent influential and imposing force, the Islamic religion, as demonstrated by this new collection of case studies, provides a framework, a history, and a set of cultural practices that have been a source of both inspiration and limitation for the performing arts and expressive culture throughout the history and geography of Indonesia.

Despite its historical and social prominence, Islam as an aspect of Indonesian music culture is a subject that has been largely ignored in scholarly representations. Islam—with its historical traditions located in the Arabian Gulf, Andalusia, the Levant, and what used to be called Mesopotamia—has often been pictured as an intruder, a foreign late-comer, and something detrimental to "real" Indonesian culture, including music, which has often been posited, somewhat myopically, as consisting overwhelmingly of the gamelans (bronze gong-chime ensembles) of Java, Bali, and a few satellite islands. Despite their marginal status in most areas of the country, gamelans have become iconic for Indonesia in both the popular and scholarly imagination and have been objects of long-standing fascination among Western musicians, composers, and ethnomusicologists since

their initial exposure to these Indonesian ensembles at the World Expositions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[1] Over the course of the 20th century, music scholars and composers reified gamelan as "Southeast Asian art music," and ethnomusicologists created hundreds of research and/or performance programs across the globe, particularly in the United States, Europe, Australia, and Japan. This attention to primarily Javanese and Balinese gamelan music, however, occurred at the expense of the myriad folk, popular, and Islamic-related musics spread over the archipelago that are more ubiquitous and that greatly enrich Indonesia's expressive culture.

Since Indonesian independence from the Dutch following World War II and particularly over recent decades, Islam has become a political, social, and martial force within Indonesia that has become increasingly visible and impossible to ignore. Native and international scholars have begun to explore in earnest the intersections of Islam and Indonesian politics, the influence of Islam upon Indonesian arts, as well as the development of "Islamic arts" within the country. As editors—one of us (Harnish) with an original orientation in the ethnomusicology of Indonesia and the other (Rasmussen) with a foundation in the ethnomusicology of the Arab world—we submit that any thorough discussion of Indonesian music must include Islam as both an indigenous cultural power and a source for artistic inspiration. We also recognize the impact of religion as a legislating force that measures the morality of performers and performance with the rule of religious authority. After organizing panels for presentations at ethnomusicology conferences in 2005 and 2006, we were encouraged to coordinate a volume of the work of leading scholars in order to more fully explicate and contextualize the subject of music and Islam among the myriad of Indonesian cultures.

Muslim Indonesia

While there are varying estimates of the total numbers, it is clear that Indonesia is home to more Muslims than any other country.[2] The Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (Biro Pusat Statistik) calculated the total population in 2006 as about 222 million, out of which just over 191 million (86.1%) were Muslims. This figure is low in comparison to 2008 estimates that place the number between 234 million and 245 million with at least 200 million Muslims. These individuals are found within most of the country's 300 ethnic groups spread across more than 6,000 inhabited islands (out of more than 17,000 islands), although at least half of all Muslims and one-half of the entire population of the country live on the densely populated island of Java. Indonesians make up about 13% of the entire world's Muslim population (Suryadinata, Arifin, and Ananta 2003, 103–12), and

they dominate the Islamic population of Southeast Asia, accounting for over 88% of Muslims in the whole region. In comparison, Indonesia's neighbor Malaysia, another country with a Muslim majority and one culturally related to Indonesia, has only about 15 million to 17 million followers.[3]

Despite these numbers, Indonesia, like many non-Arab or non-Middle Eastern countries, is somewhat marginalized among nations with Muslim majority or significant minority populations, and rarely acknowledged in the domain of religious studies and literature.[4] The country, however, because of its diverse multicultural population and seemingly progressive policies, has proven a rich site for exploration and ethnography by students and scholars of religion. While scholars (both native and non-native) are interested in presenting the many faces of Islam in Indonesia in order to simply "put Indonesia on the map" of the Islamic world, some scholars, for example James Fox, go much further and suggest that Islamic practice in Indonesia might serve as a positive example for the Muslim world to emulate (1999, 6).

> Within a consistent framework of Sunni orthodoxy, Indonesia has thus succeeded in drawing upon religious inspiration from virtually the whole of the Islamic world. It has also succeeded in developing a tradition of learning that could serve as a model for the contemporary Islamic world.

The diversity of Islamic religious practice is well known. Some communities are strongly orthodox, meaning that adherents follow Sunni Islam as globally understood in alignment with one of the four orthodox schools.[5] Other communities are orthodox but follow certain Sufi practices of mystical Islam that may align with local or esoteric Hindu or Buddhist beliefs known as Tantrism.[6] Still others embrace unique mixes of select Islamic principles with Hindu-Buddhist or indigenous animist practices. This variety is largely due to the fact that Islam was not the original religion of any region of the country, and it was progressively absorbed within pre-existing matrices of earlier practices. As Jamhari aptly states: "Various forms of Islam [in Indonesia] are logical consequences of the process of cultural synthesis that occurs when Islam enters into a certain cultural setting" (2002, 33). Since these settings in Indonesia have had distinct and diverse histories, the process of so-called Islamization has resulted in the formation of a series of sometimes competing Islams, each differing in interpretation of religious doctrine, practice, and particularly, authority. One of these Islams, is, of course, orthodox Sunni Islam, which has been considered true or pure with the sanction of the state, its authority, and the greater Islamic world.[7] Other Islams that embody syncretic mixes of doctrine, ideology, and

practice have often sought legitimacy outside of official channels or have retreated over time (see Cohen in this volume). People's lives, of course, may intersect with more than one of these various Islams, as is reflected in this collection.

Since Indonesian independence in 1945, the national government has been directly involved in shaping religious practice. The first tenet in the national ideology, Pancasila, requires belief in one God as a foundation of the nation and its citizenry. The national business of religion is conducted by the Government's Department of Religion (Departemen Agama) that divides the six religions recognized officially in Indonesia: Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and the newly added Confucianism. The affairs of the Department of Religion reflect the overwhelming majority Muslim population in the country, and its main offices in Jakarta connect hundreds of smaller offices at all government levels that are spread across the nation. Debates and discussions about the place of Islam in public and private life permeate recent Indonesian history, and this debate has intensified since the fall of the autocratic President Suharto in 1998 and the ushering in of political reform (*reformasi*) and democracy. Government officials and policies, religious boards such as *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* or ICMI (the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals, founded in 1990) and *Majelis Ulema Indonesia* or MUI (the Council of Muslim Religious Leaders),[8] and organizations, activists, intellectuals, and even artists have all contributed to the ongoing debate. Certain organizations, often labeled as Islamist, aspire to create an Islamic state fully embracing Islamic law and jurisprudence or *Shari'a*,[9] while others characterized as moderate or liberal, along with the vast majority of Indonesian Muslims, accept Indonesia as a secular state, reject narrow scriptural readings, and promote tolerance and compromise with other citizens.[10] Neither of the two large, influential Islamic social and political organizations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, strives to make Indonesia a purely Islamic state. Rather, the work of these organizations, among both men and women, is grounded in education, social work, and articulations of Islamic ideology and praxis.[11] The modernist and reformist Muhammadiyah (founded in 1912), with nearly 30 million mostly urban members, aims toward the pure and proper practice of religion based on new reading of original texts. This practice, called *ijtihad*, has been adopted from the movements of modernist reform in Egypt and the Arab world, including Saudi Arabia. The so-called traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, founded in 1926), with 35 million to 40 million members, has its base in rural Java. Although often characterized as conservative and old-fashioned, NU leaders and institutions, particularly the extensive network of religious boarding schools or *pesantren*, have promoted the rigorous study of Islamic texts while at the same time tolerating a range of local, indigenous customs and ideas that are considered, particularly by

the disapproving modernists, as "pre-, non- or extra- Islamic" (see Rasmussen and Sumarsam in this volume).[12]

As Indonesia has progressed toward greater orthodoxy in Islamic practice, other religions—notably Christianity and Hinduism (roughly 8.7% and 1.8%, respectively, of the population)—have grown in uniform orthodoxy and been characterized by a new conservatism as well. This 20th-century mass movement toward increased and further controlled religiosity seems to have paralleled accompanying constructs of modernity dating from Indonesian independence in 1945.[13] Religious piety in Indonesia surged forward following the mass murders of nearly one million communists and sympathizers, in reaction to a supposed communist coup attempt in Jakarta in 1965–66.[14] One aftermath of this severe "cultural trauma" (Alexander, 2004) was the government decree in 1967 that all Indonesians register as followers of an acknowledged world religion.[15] This act privileged major, orthodox religious institutions and disadvantaged splinter sects, indigenous religious communities, and syncretic practices. Religious intensification accelerated again in the 1990s as President Suharto's authoritarian government relaxed some restrictions on Islamic organizations (in place from the 1960s to the 1980s),[16] and then again in the late 1990s following the president's resignation. The push toward reformist Islam, promulgated by radical Islamic organizations, strengthened at that time, perhaps in part to fill a power vacuum after the fall of the autocratic Suharto; the movement, however, has subsided slightly after sectarian violence and Islamist terrorist attacks within Indonesia in the early 21st century, which did not find popular support.

Regardless of the historic period, the role of music in society and its potential use within or deviance from religious life has been of concern to most political and social organizations. Each chapter in this collection illustrates the ways in which political and cultural leaders have been interested in co-opting religious power and knowledge. Expressive cultural practices, including collective ritual, music, and dance, and even mass-mediated forms of entertainment, have been handmaidens in the process of articulating religious identity—whether these arts are consciously manipulated or not.

Islamization and Indigenization

By the time Muslim traders began traveling to and settling in Indonesia's archipelago in significant numbers from the 13th to the 16th centuries, the region had already developed rich and diverse folk and court traditions, the latter inspired by Indic influence. While folk arts were performed as part of indigenous rites connected to divine ancestors, agricultural fertility, and the land, the courtly arts

reflected and promoted the Hindu and Buddhist cultural strata. Courtly arts were used to popularize and teach the Buddhist and Hindu religions, to empower the courts and nobles, and even to reify the very constructs of rulership. Once Islam was embraced by rulers, many of whom converted their titles from Indic "Raja" to Islamic "Sultan," some of these arts were modified to both reflect and communicate new symbols and values that reinforced the power and status of the ruling elite. Thus, Islamic influences came to be seen and heard in many of the arts, including gamelan traditions, sung poetry, and theatre. Quite apart from influencing or modifying extant arts, new music and dance forms considered specifically Islamic, for example collective singing in Arabic accompanied by *rebana* frame drums, were introduced from abroad or by returning pilgrims or Hajis and were either adopted with few if any modifications or became assimilated over time. As documented by many of this volume's authors, these two processes—the influence of Islam on extant arts and the introduction of new Islamic ideas and practices—led to the hybridity that characterized the period of early contact and are still ongoing today.

The tradition of skepticism, caution, or disapproval of music in Islamic communities is well known in Middle Eastern and Arab contexts; this is a central theme in discussions internally and globally. The extent to which such discussions that originate in medieval Mesopotamia are applicable to 21st-century Indonesia is debatable. Conversations on the effects of music, dance, and theatric performance have been adopted, adapted, and debated in the same ways that other ideological frameworks originating in a Middle Eastern and Arab context are imported and assimilated into the fabric of local culture. Most of the chapters in this volume, in fact, make reference to various aspects of the now-globalized discourse concerning the "permissibility of music." Suffice it to say that Indonesia, while adopting and adapting liberally from the Muslim menu, seems to have largely avoided the problematized position of music, and instead has preserved local attitudes on the role of the arts or has blended the larger Islamic world perspective with the local worldview.[17]

In addition to the waxing and waning of various opinions about music, Indonesia inherited a number of instrument-types from the Muslim world that migrated to the archipelago. Many Indonesian musical instruments, the routes and roots of which are a challenge to trace definitively, clearly have relatives in or originate from what used to be called Mesopotamia or elsewhere in the Muslim world. Wooden double-reed aerophones (*tetepret*, *selompret*, *preret*, *tarompet*, *serunai*, *seruni*, and so forth), frame drums (*rebana*, *terbana*, *terbang*, and so forth), the *rebab* (two-stringed bowed lute), the *bedhug* barrel drum, and the *gambus* lute are some examples of instruments that have cousins in the Muslim world outside of Indonesia. Instruments that originate from Islamic areas rimming the Indian

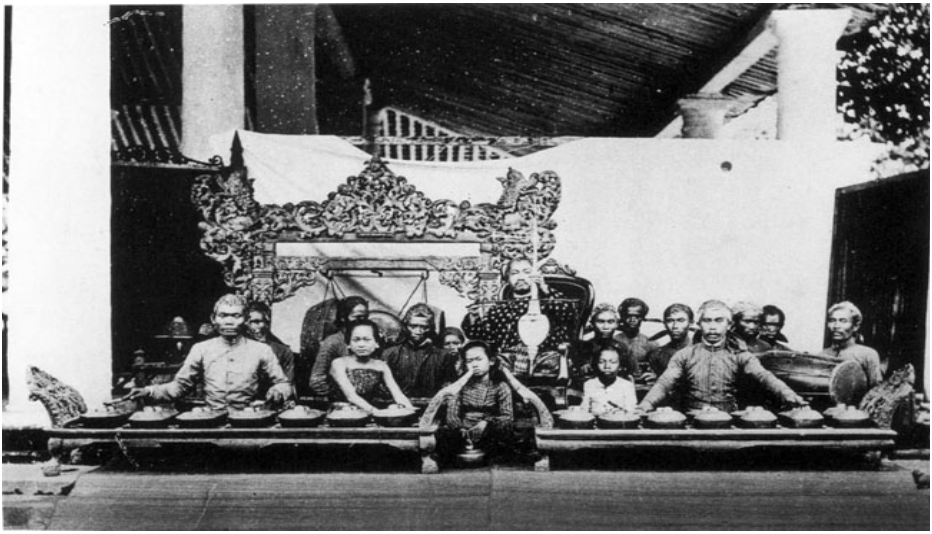

Figure 1.2. The *rebab*, a "migrant" from the Middle East (center), with seated player in the context of the Javanese Gamelan of the Bupati (Regent) of Blora (Central Java), Raden Tumenggung Cakranegara, 1862. (Photo courtesy of KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies)

Figure 1.3. The *preret*, a wooden double-reed aerophone played in Lombok, 2001. (photo courtesy of David Harnish)

Ocean—including frame drums, double-reed aerophones, *gambus*, and *rebab*—confirm Indonesia's place in music of the Muslim world. Beyond material construction, instrumental and vocal style and timbre can index an Islamic spirit in any music, from the singing of *sholawat*, songs in praise of the Prophet Muhammad, to the latest pop hit in the *dangdut* style.

In Indonesia and Southeast Asia in general, flexible attitudes regarding the acceptability of artistic expression in connection to religion prevail, distinguishing this region from the Middle East and even South Asia (Hooker 2006, 128). We find some of the most obvious evidence for compatibility between music and religion in the terms "seni Islam" (Islamic art) and "musik Islam" (Islamic music) or "seni musik Islam" (Islamic musical arts), which are coined in many contexts and even among the most conservative religious authorities. Some artists and officials further distinguish *musik Islam* (forms originally from the Middle East or Islamic South Asia) from *musik islami* (Indonesian music with Islamic characteristics) (see van Zanten in this volume). These kinds of categorizations reveal 1) an impulse by officials and leaders to conceptualize values, histories, symbolism, and musical forms; 2) a tendency to thus subject all expressive forms to scrutiny to determine acceptability; 3) a cognitive distinction between imported and local Islamic arts; and, most importantly, 4) that music is not banned out of hand and in fact has an acknowledged place in Indonesian Islam. As we shall see in several chapters, local artistic expressions of Islam have a long history of approval and may be increasingly acceptable as long as there are apparent Islamic themes, the music and dance enhance sobriety and morality (or at least do not promote immorality), and the whole performance medium (message, behavior, venue, and context) does not conflict with or distract from basic Islamic duties and practice.[18] Indeed, some Indonesian intellectuals believe that a development of Islamic arts is necessary for the future of Islamic civilization (see, for example, Latif in Fealy and Hooker 2006, 129).

Music in Indonesian Religion

Music has played a central role in religious ritual in historic Indonesia and was often used as a vehicle to empower rulers and to spread knowledge and ideology.[19] To understand music's role within Islamic performance contexts in Indonesia, we must first look to pre-Islamic eras that provided a structure for the religion's assimilation, implantation, and expansion. Waves of influence over hundreds of years came to Indonesia by sea trade. Indian traders, for example, played perhaps the largest role in the introductions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam; Chinese traders were instrumental in both Buddhist and Islamic developments; and traders

from the Arabian Gulf played an obvious role in the establishment and evolution of Islam.

Prior to the coming of the world religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, the religious beliefs of the hundreds of ethnic groups that occupied the Indonesian archipelago were encompassed into what was to eventually be called "*adat*," a concept derived from the Arabic word referring to cultural custom, tradition, and etiquette. This concept of *adat* encompasses spiritual systems based in animism involving kinship and natural and ancestral worship that include performing arts as part of ritual practice. The practice of *adat* enabled the acculturation of Hinduism and Buddhism into divergent syntheses across the archipelago, a process that was also initiated with the coming of Islam.

The customs, traditions, and etiquette associated with *adat*, in fact, continue in most areas of Indonesia today; however, such beliefs have been diluted or transformed either in response to the increasing conservatism of world religions over recent centuries or because of the forces of postmodern globalization. In rural parts of the country, where agrarian living encourages maintaining a relationship with the landscape, more of these beliefs have been retained than in urban centers, where education, nationalism, modernism, and globalization have advanced. Depending on the area and ethnic group, practices connected to *adat* are often folded into Islamic practice or vice versa; however, since many modernists judge or legislate religious practice, *adat* has come under attack by leaders who label it as non-Muslim and as a reflection of the impurities in Indonesian Islam (see Kipp and Rogers 1987). Critics of *adat* denounce the monism of pre-Islamic thought, where the divine is one and unified both here and everywhere with the physical world, in favor of the dualism of Islamic worldview, which bifurcates the universe and world into two parts, for example, good and evil and heaven and earth. Such declarations have had an impact on the performance of traditional music, theatre, and dance, particularly when a performance is part of a ceremony associated with *adat,* syncretism, or heterodoxy (see Harnish, Cohen, and Pätzold in this volume).

When Hindu and Buddhist ideas and practices came to Indonesia, the performing arts were a catalyst for their assimilation. While some Indic influence may go back to 200 BCE, elements of Hinduism, for example, various monuments and the Pallava South Indian script, are apparent in the 2nd to 4th centuries CE (see Taylor 2003). Both Hinduism and Buddhism were concentrated in the emerging courts and gave religious and political legitimacy to rulers. This Indianization centralized religious and political power in a way previously unseen in Indonesia. Performing arts developed to confirm and defend the new institutions of royal armies and courts, which were given divine sanction by priests and temples, and later to validate their expansion.

Figure 1.4. Map of historical kingdoms.

Figure 1.5. Photo of the great Javanese Buddhist monument, Borobudur. (public domain photo)

In the 7th century, Sriwijaya became the most powerful court and a major Vajrayana Buddhist center in South Sumatra, where Buddhist monks from many parts of Asia came to study. New powerful Hindu courts emerged in Java in the 8th century and subsequently a series of Buddhist and Hindu courts, which flourished and declined, borrowed from each other, helping to establish the Hindu-Buddhist label used by many scholars.[20] Several kingdoms, particularly in Central Java, left magnificent legacies; for example, the Buddhist Sailendra dynasty established the early 9th-century Borobudur temple, while the Hindu Sanjaya dynasty of the Mataram kingdom developed the later 9th-century Prambanan complex.

Temple reliefs of music scenes and instruments (of Indic and Southeast Asian appearance), as well as excavated material objects, indicate that Hindu-Buddhist Javanese courts honored music. Manuscripts written centuries later referring to this period repeatedly mention musical functionaries, for example chief drummer or orchestra leader (Kunst 1949, 111). In the period leading to the Majapahit empire, the Hindu epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were translated from Sanskrit to Kawi (Old Javanese with numerous Sanskrit loan words). These epics stimulated the development of a number of musical and theatrical forms, and all of the courtiers had to learn to play music, sing, dance, or recite poetry (Sumarsam 1995, 14). In complement to the artistic activities of courtiers, servants and slaves also served as musicians and dancers.

The 14th-century-1500 Majapahit empire in East Java is the best known and the last major Hindu-Buddhist center. During these golden age years when the court controlled trade and claimed suzerainty of tribute throughout most of the archipelago, the courtly arts gained further definition and refinement. Sumarsam reports that special division of the court was responsible, among other duties, to supervise programs in the performing arts (Ibid). Wars of succession weakened the Majapahit kingdom in the early 15th century, however, and later in that century, Majapahit rulers could no longer control the rising power of the Sultanate of Malacca in Malaysia. Following a series of battles with the Sultanate of Demak on Java's north coast, the Majapahit royalty moved eastward to Kediri. By or before 1527, when the last vestiges of Majapahit were defeated, some royalty and their retinues, including priests, musicians, and gamelans, moved further eastward to Bali, the one island of the Indonesian archipelago that has retained Hinduism to this day.[21] The Islamic Kingdom of Demak in East Java was by then the most powerful kingdom in the region. With the fall of the Hindu Sunda/Pajajaran kingdom in the west to the rising Sultanate of Banten in the 16th century, most of Java became, at least nominally, Muslim.[22]

Later in the 16th century arose the mighty Islamic Mataram Kingdom, centered near the former Hindu Mataram Kingdom in Central Java. The new Muslim leaders soon eclipsed the rulers in Demak to become the most dominant power in Java and much of Indonesia. European powers were also in play during this era of dynamic and changing leadership. When the Dutch East India Company (VOC: Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie), perhaps the first multinational corporation in the world, arrived in the archipelago before the 17th century, the Portuguese had already been active there for about 100 years (Taylor 2003, 140). As historian Jean Gelman Taylor writes, while the Portuguese "had begun laying down their network in an archipelago that was becoming Muslim," the Dutch "arrived as Muslim governments were maturing" (Ibid).

> They [the Dutch] became one of Indonesia's sea peoples, sailing the archipelago's highways, trading, raiding, and placing their armies and navies at the disposal of Indonesian kings to defeat rivals. They aimed to control segments of the international trade in Indonesian sea and forest products through alliances with archipelago rulers, by negotiation or conquest. (Taylor 2003, 141)

The Dutch gradually gained power by bolstering certain factions, directly installing favored royal clients, requiring tribute, or, at other times, supporting opposing forces to diminish the power of the Mataram empire. As the VOC exerted control over trade networks, they interfered in the business of the royal

family. Innovative technologies, intermarriage, and the introduction of Roman script—put into competition with the Arabic script for the writing of the Malay language, a major language of trade in the Indian Ocean—were tools to increase the company's influence throughout the archipelago. Mataram, the locus of Javanese political power and cultural capital, had been weakened by frequent wars of succession, and the Dutch accordingly acquired more and more power. In the late 1740s, the Mataram ruler, Pakubuwana II, built a new palace in present-day Surakarta (also known as Solo), because the Dutch had successively created a wedge within the royal family and opponents had ransacked the previous palace. His brother, Mangkubumi, initiated a rebellion at about the same time in response to failed promises from the VOC and Pakubuwana II, and this insurgency resulted in the 1755 division of Mataram into the courts of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, 65 kilometers from one another (Ricklefs 2001, 126–29). Internal rivalries a few years later and again in the early 19th century led to the development of two lesser courts: the Mangkunegaran in Surakarta and the Pakualaman in Yogyakarta. This complex history is of particular interest to scholars and aficionados of Indonesian arts because these courts maintained and developed their own styles of gamelan ensemble, repertoire and technique, distinct styles of dance, and varied theatrical traditions. Even the plastic and material arts, including textiles such as batik, are distinguished for their association with either major court center: Yogyakarta (Yogya) and Surakarta (Solo).

Mysticism

Shrouded in legend, the development of music and Islam in the courts from the early Islamic period through the 19th century lies near the border of myth and history. Sufism played a crucial role in the early implantation of Islam into Indonesia, and the *wali sanga*, literally the "nine saints," are believed to have later spread their mystical practices throughout the country. Sufi orders (*tarekat*) are known to still exist in most areas of Indonesia, and their ceremonial practices, such as the widespread devotional chant *dhikr* (remembrance of God), constitute a core component of *musik Islam*. Yet, Sufism, a term not in regular use until the 1970s in Indonesia, is contentious. With its emphasis on the "mystical path," it is often presented as something other than orthodox Islam.

The early Islamic Sultanates were essentially still Hindu in practice and relied on Hindu constructs of divine rulership, semi-divine and charismatic kings, and attention to ritual—including music, dance, and theatre—to maintain and legitimize authority. As Islamic ideology and practice were applied and

institutionalized, the arts became tools for popularizing the religion and the conversion process among commoners and courtiers alike. The Sufi mysticism inherent in Muslim practice replaced or merged with Hindu-Buddhist Tantric mysticism and practitioners adopted similar aesthetic ideals and communal practices such as chanting, singing, movement, prayer, ritual, and so forth. Thus, although early manifestations of Islam were those of elite spiritual practice, commoners soon began to embrace and identify with the religion (see, for example, Braginsky 2004, Becker 1993, and Woodward 1989).

The Hindu-Buddhism and Sufism of the courts shared several fundamental principles. Both mystical traditions, for example, embraced the notion that supernatural power is likely to flow to those who have had profound mystical experiences of the divine. Venerating ancestors, deriving power from important lineages, honoring god-kings, and a unitary theory of Godhead were also common to both Hindu-Buddhist and Sufi thought and praxis. In fact, it was these shared elements within Sufi teachings—the inner, the personal, the experiential, and the spiritual—that resonated with local populations and that were the most influential in spreading Islam.

The Javanese court, whether Muslim or Hindu, represented a unique synthesis of spiritual practice and constituted a *mandala*. In Hindu-Buddhist ideology, a *mandala* is a visualization or physical manifestation of the center of the cosmos and represents a microcosm of the world. Thus, the Javanese court constituted a sacred space with a semi-divine king, and it was necessary for the courts to nurture gamelan music and dance to glorify the palace culture and to centralize and demonstrate noble spiritual power (see DeVale 1977, Becker and Becker 1981, Heine-Geldern 1942, and Anderson 1972). It was the early Muslim courts, such as Demak and Mataram, that, in fact, organized large gamelan ensembles, often featuring singers, in court rituals (see Sumarsam 1995). Musical performance was integral to the aesthetics and power of mysticism, and musical and spiritual aesthetics converged at the juncture of political power in this early stage of Indonesia's history. The notion of music's power to confirm the spiritual and the political was thus well established.

Hindu-Buddhist aesthetics, woven into a Sufi covering, appear to underlie many of the gamelan and dance traditions of the court to the present day.[23] Due to the ongoing process of localizing Sufic/Islamic ideology and praxis and its synthesis with Hindu-Buddhism, the adoption of Islam did not radically alter musical practices in Java; rather it made them deeper, more complex, and utterly fascinating. For example, the rendering of poetry in solo song (*tembang*), the performance of gamelan ensembles, and the combination of *tembang* and gamelan has been practiced in courts and hamlets for many centuries until today (Sutton 1998, 633–34). Epic texts and creation myths presented in *wayang kulit* shadow

puppet theatre ran parallel to the narratives of Islam and have continued unabated (see Headley 2000). Islamic elements were woven into the music, poetry, dialogue, and plot scenarios of extant Hindu-derived *wayang* tales and entirely new narratives developed, as in the Serat Menak stories that feature the character Amir Hamza,[24] an Arab protagonist and uncle of the Prophet Muhammad. Although set in an Islamic context, the Serat Menak *wayang* stories maintained the same narrative structure and qualities of the Hindu *wayang* tales, including, particularly, notions of morality and personal power.

Scholars hold a variety of positions on the presence of Islam in the performing arts. Jaap Kunst, in his magnum opus, *Music in Java*, never refers to Islam as altering Indonesian music traditions in either negative or positive ways; instead, he asserts that it is European music that, in the early 20th century, inflicted great damage to indigenous traditions (1949, 3–4).[25] Anderson famously suggests that the "tolerance" of the Javanese is a value that helps construct a steady state, maintains order, and (in theory) prevents fundamentalism. This tolerance, he asserts, emerges from the moral pluralisms of complex histories, social hierarchies, and *wayang kulit* stories and characters that underpin an emotional religious mythology that is in "essential opposition to the cosmologies of Christianity and Islam" on strict issues of good and evil (1996, 17). Many scholars, however (including Sumarsam in this volume), believe that it is more than just tolerance, that part of the Hindu-Buddhist mysticism of Javanese arts and aesthetics was progressively augmented or even replaced with Islam via Sufism.[26] In other words, Sufi mysticism was gradually substituted for Hindu-Buddhist mysticism as Islam was absorbed into court culture. New forms and performance contexts following the Muslim calendar and Muslim life-cycle rites were adopted without overtly impacting the existing performing arts. Indeed, for Javanese heritage—literature, music, and so forth—to be retained, it had to Islamize (see Simuh 1999, 14). Sufism allowed a smooth, almost unnoticeable transition between religions. While these developments were subtle in the court centers of Java, in other regions of the archipelago, especially coastal centers, the influence of Islam was much more pronounced.

The alliance of artistic and spiritual practice, while an obvious aspect of the localization of Islam in Indonesia, is not entirely uncontested. Historically, there were some Sufis in both Indonesia and the greater Islamic world who ignored the basic tenets of Islam, and this occasionally invited persecution. Many Sufis hold that the secret mystical doctrine, rather than *Shari'a*, is the "embodiment of truth and the key to salvation" and may forego normative piety, inviting accusations of "devolving into excess" (Woodward 1989, 5). It should be noted, however, that the majority of Sufi practices—such as fasts and extensive prayers denying the needs of the body while strengthening the soul and mind—are

acceptable and honored as pious activities. Much of the controversy surrounding contemporary Sufi orders (*tarekat*) is that some of them are guided by a charismatic master (*shaykh* or *kyai*), who may claim to be a Prophet and demand loyalty as an absolute Islamic authority. Organizations like Muhammadiyah and MUI have denounced and even abolished certain *tarekat*, and their efforts of suppression bring increased scrutiny to more legitimate Sufi orders that seek through music and ritual not only the dissolution between God and self but also the interiorization of God's word through the repetition of His name and the recitation of the Qur'an. Thus, the new word "Sufism," from the lexicon of global Islam that has been ascribed to those orders involved in so-called excesses, is a pejorative term, and many practitioners of Sufi-related forms would never use "Sufism" to define their spiritual practice.

Islamic Currents in the Archipelago

This volume offers alternative perspectives on a dominant and collectively established discourse that presents the arrival of Islam, borne by foreign traders, as an aggressive act and traumatic moment for Indonesia, a "peaceful" and "developed" Southeast Asian civilization.[27] The disassociation of Southeast Asian expressive culture from the Arab and Islamic world is a practice that developed within a Western European intellectual tradition that privileges a geographic orientation pitting the European Occident against the Middle Eastern Orient, with East, South, and Southeast Asia on a separate and peripheral axis. Although historians concede that the ideas and practices of Islam were introduced through trade and not warfare, the conversion process is presented as unidirectional (from the outside in), a process in which natives of island Southeast Asia had little choice but to react and adapt. A new generation of researchers in a variety of fields is now challenging this problematic positioning of Islam.

Scholars of the region, for example Barbaba Andaya (2006) and Engseng Ho (2006), recognize the Indian Ocean as a culture area that encompasses the flow of ideas, practices, and diasporic populations throughout and around the circumference of the Indian Ocean, a body of water that was certainly central to both the economic life and ideological worldview of populations living on the continents of Africa, Arabia, India, and mainland and island Southeast Asia. Andaya's remarks regarding the importance of sea people and coastal communities allow us to imagine a scenario in which Muslim travelers and traders from Arabia, India, China, or Champa were welcomed both for who they were and what they had to offer in the way of material goods and ideas from other parts of the world. Andaya (2006, 670) writes of the seafaring populations (*orang laut*):

> *Orang laut* knowledge of local conditions was especially critical in places where navigation was difficult, and in the Strait of Malacca and other offshore areas, they traditionally helped guard the sea lanes, often compelling passing ships to stop and trade in nearby ports.

She later affirms that:

> Although generalizations are always problematic, I follow O.W Wolters (1999: 46) in suggesting that an environment of acceptance and openness to the outside, "a tradition of hospitality," was generally characteristic of coastal and seagoing communities. (Ibid, 684)

Both statements suggest that traders were invited and welcomed, notions that deflate the characterization of Islam as a unitary and intruding force into Southeast Asia.

It is essential to note here that Islam, as one of the world's monotheistic religions, has at its basis a complex and comprehensive set of documents (the Qur'an and the Sunna, or the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad) that are recorded in Arabic and that even to this day require interpretation by specialists, who learn how to read, perform, and interpret these texts. While conversion to the Muslim religion theoretically requires only a confession of faith, learning and understanding Muslim doctrine and putting it into practice is a much weightier endeavor. Islamic practices, however, from the singing of songs to ideas about personal hygiene and diet, were introduced much more easily and naturally by people from circumoceanic communities and such practices were adapted by host Indonesian communities, gradually, as a part of the much longer process of Islamization. Connected to this premise is the understanding that many of the ideas and practices introduced by these Indian Ocean traders, for example elements of Sufism, resonated with ideas and practices that were already quotidian in host communities. The process of Islamization via the process of syncretism, however, must be envisioned as at least a two-way street, if not as a more complex intersection characterized by multidirectional flow. As Indonesia was Islamized, Islam was also indigenized or adapted to the regional or ethnic values and practices that were of utmost importance to local populations.

Muslim ideology and praxis is thought to have established a foothold first in Aceh, the region at the northwest tip of Sumatra in the Indian Ocean and the closest point to the Arabian Gulf. Although historians cite the 13th century as the dawn of Islam in the archipelago, most agree that Muslim traders and seafarers had already been in this region for perhaps several centuries (see Ricklefs 2001). While foreign Asians (Indians, Arabs, Chinese) made up the majority of these

early traders, it is likely that through marriage or conversion there were already many indigenous Muslims in Sumatra. Trade was the primary reason for Muslims to come to Indonesia, and trade was the primary way of life for those near the sea, which, in an archipelago of thousands of islands, necessarily comprises a significant portion of the population at any time in the region's history. Thus, it was trade and trade opportunities, both economic and cultural, that may have first inspired locals to adopt Islam and become part of the larger Muslim community (*umma*).

Throughout Indonesia, then, the port and coastal areas were those first exposed to the outside world, and today these areas, known as *padang pesisir*, are still thought of as the oldest or most originally Muslim communities of Indonesia. Some historians assert that merchants were the original proselytizers to Indonesia, followed later by Sufis; others, however, believe that Sufis were involved in the first wave of introduction after the fall of Baghdad to Mongols in 1258, which helped spur the ascent of Sufism and an increased influx of Arabs, particularly from Hadramaut in Yemen, to Indonesia. Unfortunately, no conclusive evidence exists to prove either claim (Ricklefs 2001, 16). Historians and other scholars of the region agree, however, that Islam was introduced by a multicultural diaspora who were part of the Indian-Ocean *umma* and that, while the unidirectional flow of information from the authoritative homeland of the Islamic religion was important, the more circular and multidirectional flow of peoples, ideas, and cultures was just as, if not even more, significant.

Manifestations of Islamic culture in Sumatra alone exemplify these two kinds of cultural flow. The region of Aceh in Northwest Sumatra, often referred to as "the veranda of Mecca" because it lies closest to the Arabian Gulf and far from Java, remains a stronghold of Islam in Indonesia. In contrast to Aceh, known for its religious conservatism, formative intellectual and literary traditions were established in the Minangkabau region of West Sumatra, where the Malay language, the lingua franca of the Indian Ocean, first took hold. West Sumatra became the cradle of the Indonesian literary tradition and the Malay language, which forms the basis for the national language, Bahasa Indonesia. During the late-19th and 20th centuries, West Sumatra was a hive of scholarly activity on Islamic topics and became the intellectual Islamic center of the Malay world particularly during the 19th century, when reform through the process of *ijtihad* (new readings of classical texts) was a topic of debate (see Azra 2004; Fealy and Hooker 2006). And, while the religion of Islam and the regional language, Malay, flourished in West Sumatra, Islamic culture was localized to include, for example, the predilection for matrilineal and matrilocal family structures and practices among the majority Minangkabau ethnic group of that region.

Java, the second largest completely Indonesian island, with its own complex, multiple, and deeply rooted linguistic and cultural traditions, absorbed and adapted Islam

in myriad ways that are both ingeniously creative and tenaciously controversial to the present day. By the early 16th century most of the north coast kingdoms were Islamic. Some of the rulers were Javanese while others were foreign Asians, particularly Malays or Chinese. The interior, on the other hand, was still largely Hindu-Buddhist, and there was occasional warfare between these areas. Ricklefs reminds us that this warfare was not likely a product of irreconcilable religious or cultural differences (2001, 8–9). Processes of cultural assimilation and accommodation between Islam and Hindu-Buddhism had long been at work in both Islamized courts, where Muslim leaders emulated Hindu-Buddhist Javanese rulers, and in Hindu-Buddhist courts, where certain retainers and liaisons were Muslim and select royalty had converted for personal reasons. The origins of this warfare between Muslim and Hindu-Buddhist courts were instead probably political and economic, and the control of trade routes again played a role. The process of accommodation that Ricklefs speaks of may well have been a factor in shaping Islam in Java differently than in places like Sumatra, Sulawesi, or Malaysia; indeed, Muslim Java, unlike most areas, has strongly maintained Hindu-related performing arts until today.[28]

Texts, Saints, and Further Islamization

Many Indonesian texts, for example the *Centhini* (see Sumarsam and Cohen in this volume), describe the coming and ascendance of Islam in Java. Written in the 18th to 19th centuries long after Islam's establishment in ports, courts, and communities, these texts recount magical legends undifferentiated from historical chronologies. The nonlinear nature of the *Centhini* and other Indonesian texts has been of great interest to scholars of culture, but has been problematic for those historians seeking a linear procession of events.[29] While the specific process of conversion is unstated, these texts are rich in poetics and reveal how generations of Javanese have looked upon Islam and Islamization; they also help shed light on developments within music, dance, and theatre. In short, a series of oral and written texts ascribe the initial Javanese conversions to nine saints, the *wali sanga*, most of whom were non-Javanese mystical evangelists who performed magical acts and used the performing arts to popularize Islam in Java and throughout various areas of the country during the later Majapahit and early Demak years. The importance of these Sufi-oriented saints cannot be overstated. Their tombs are shrines, festivals have been established in their names, a variety of ethnic groups claim ancestral or cultural lineage with individual *wali*, and they are very much a part of current discourse on Islam in Indonesia.

Several developments reveal the formation of varying Islams. First, Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world, and its sea space and multicultural,

multilingual reality have prevented the unilateral transmission of one dogma or dominant discourse. While those involved in trade were quick to convert to Islam, farmers inland, whose livelihood depended upon fertility and powers of the landscape, had little reason to do so with any consistency. Second, Islamization required many centuries, and religious ideas were introduced from numerous areas, including Arabia, Egypt, China, Persia, and particularly India (Gujerat and Kerala), and a bit later even from Malaysia and other islands around the archipelago. As in other countries where Muslim populations have settled from all over the so-called Muslim world, including recently in North America and Europe, the roots of Islam in Indonesia are themselves multicultural: No single dominant Islamic paradigm prevailed. Third, in spite of the rise of global orthodox Islam, including the ardent Wahhabism introduced from Saudi Arabia, no single model of Islam is promoted within Indonesia today.

The multicultural roots and multiple manifestations of Islam in Indonesia have been both distinguishing and problematic. The patterns of cultural assimilation already established for Hinduism and Buddhism, a synthesis supporting matrices of rituals, animism, ancestor worship, ritual storytelling, music, and concepts of divine rulership, readily extended to Islam. For certain Muslim leaders, however, extricating orthodox Islam from these matrices and positioning it as the one and only religion was and remains an exceedingly difficult task. Frustration with parsing Muslim-ness from Indonesian-ness in the archipelago was a catalyst for the reform movement, which began in the 19th century and gave rise to the major Javanese reformist organizations in the early 20th century. Anti-colonial sentiment, particularly during such skirmishes as those in Aceh, Java, Sulawesi, and Lombok, also helped spur forward orthodoxy as a position of unity and resistance against Western imperialism.

During the colonial period and particularly the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Dutch government was careful to limit communication between Indonesians and Muslims outside the archipelago while encouraging rituals and pageantry at the courts to blunt Islamic expansion and political organization. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the late 19th-century advancement of the steamship, however, led to a flood of Indonesians undertaking the pilgrimage to Mecca, the Hajj. These Hajis returned with a new religious outlook. Some set up *pesantren* boarding schools or worked to reform Islam in Indonesia, which they viewed as tainted or impure; many used Islam as a rallying point for rebellion against the non-Muslim Dutch, who often responded with brutal force. During World War II as they swept through Southeast Asia, the Japanese imperial army ousted the Dutch in 1942 and occupied Indonesia until 1945. Following the war, Holland was interested in reclaiming the country, but resistance was fierce; thus began the war for

independence that was won in 1949 after the final Dutch forces retreated. As one of the war heroes, Sukarno, became president, Islam, nationalism, and communism became forces vying for dominance. Following the mass killings of 1965–66, communism virtually disappeared, Islamization within the context of nationalism accelerated, and much of Indonesia gradually adopted a more orthodox worldview. A neomodernist Islamic revival emerged from this trauma and became more apparent in the late 1970s as political leaders, including the president himself, became more Islamic in their appearance, words (i.e. Arabic phrases), and actions (Woodward 1996, 14).[30] Following Suharto's resignation in 1998, political Islam quickly gained public prominence, though the subsequent electoral results have been mixed as most Indonesians appear wary of supporting the idea of an Islamic state.

While there have been many movements and developments within the archipelago since the 13th century, the chapters in this volume reveal that Islamization is an ongoing process and that various groups in Indonesia will always be discussing the best ways to learn about the history, values, and practices of religion, a process that is often facilitated by arts and expressive culture.

Situating Music and Islam within Indonesia

Wherever one is in Indonesia, the soundscape of Islam is constant and unmistakable. The *adzan* (or *azan*; also *adhan*), repeated five times daily to call people to prayer, is symbolic of the *umma* (the Muslim world community). Its ubiquitous sound engages all listeners in a relationship to Islam. This soundprint indexes language, practice, and ideology while reminding Muslims of their basic duties and signaling this tenet to non-Muslims.[31] The *adzan* has also served as a time-marker and as a sonic footprint of the mosque, where many religious, educational, and social activities transpire. As in the rest of the Islamic world, *adzan* and Quranic recitation (*tilawatil Qur'an*) are not considered music per se. Their musicality is, however, acknowledged, as they contribute sound patterns of intense religious value and feeling. Just the Arabic language alone, the language of the Prophet and of the Qur'an that is understood by a minority of Muslims in Indonesia, conveys not only the meanings of these texts but also symbolizes the sacred in myriad ways (see Rasmussen and Berg in this volume).

Discussions and opinions regarding the permissibility of music are diverse, complex, divisive, and contentious in contemporary Indonesia. Music, due to its ability to move the human heart, has been scrutinized by Islamic leaders, both in Indonesia and throughout the world. Apart from readily accepted forms of Islamic

song, music is not always encouraged in Muslim Indonesia. As Nelson writes of her research on Egypt, "it is not so much the un-Islamic associations of music (luxury and vice) that call up objections as it is music's compelling power, which makes it a rival with Islam for human souls" (Nelson 1985, 189). According to Nelson, among other scholars, musical experience may lead to passivity or sensual indulgence, both dangerous states of being that should be avoided. As in Muslim societies throughout the world, Indonesian Islamic scholars have levied their opinions and developed organizations whose charge it is to assess activities and items, including music, as either *halal* (permitted) or *haram* (forbidden); these two terms appear in several of this volume's chapters. If a music or dance form is considered to "glorify Islam" or to make Muslims feel "close to God and His messenger," then it inevitably becomes *halal* (Subyakto in Healy and Hooker 2006, 131). The style of music is sometimes less relevant than its intention or content, much to the chagrin of some reformists who are anxious about popular music styles, the emotions and physical movements they may stimulate, and the potential mixing of the sexes that popular music promotes. Such reservations among conservatives have led to *fatwas*, or rulings on the lawfulness of such forms and their artists. Popular music, however, is a viable and effective vehicle for religious messages, and it has the potential to unite still larger mass audiences into an "imagined community" that is at the same time religious and modern (see Anderson 2006; see also Capwell, Weintraub, and van Zanten in this volume). It is important to note here that the position of Islam vis-à-vis music is always contextually and temporally dependent and that many discussions that have emerged on the permissibility of music have been adapted from discourse in the Arab world and Middle East. Such discussions within Indonesia have had a mixed reception.

Islam has been an inspiration for music associated with courtly arts, folk music, and popular music for centuries, but there has been a marked increase in popularity of Islam-inspired forms of various sorts in the 21st century. Islamic songs in Arabic (*musik Islam*) are virtually always *halal*. Texts may come from various collections of Arabic poetry such as the Qasidah Burdah or Barzanji (stories about the Prophet Muhammad and his life), refer to the 99 names of God, or impart verses of the Qur'an and the Hadith (collections of the Prophet's sayings). Such song texts, because they are both in Arabic and part of the Islamic literary canon, are markers of authentic Islam.

Differing from *musik Islam* with its Arabic texts, *musik islami* (music featuring Islamic characteristics) is a category that can include all kinds of folk and popular music in regional languages and in Indonesian, as well as newly composed music and popular music hybrids. Like *musik Islam*, *musik islami* styles may be considered important for *dakwah*, bringing people to Islam, an important criterion for the acceptability of any music. Globalization is certainly a force in styles of *musik*

islami; new ideas and sounds from the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world have come to Indonesia, and sounds from Indonesia resonate outward into the Islamic world. For example, *gambus* music, established particularly in Indonesia and around the archipelago, has always taken Arabic popular music as its inspiration. *Nasyid*, also called *akapella*, conversely, is a form of group singing from the Middle East that flourished first in Malaysia and then in Indonesia and acquired a trendy and youth-oriented style. That style, which immediately became popular in Indonesia, features young male stars configured like American boy-bands, who sing arrangements with the functional harmonies, electronic samples, and gentle timbres of Western popular music, sometimes with texts in Arabic. And, *dangdut*, on the other hand, a popular Indonesian hybrid of Hindi film music, "Malay" ensemble music (*orkes Melayu*), western rock, and Arabic stylings, flowed outward to Malaysia and beyond. Indonesian popular music artists and new music composers have increasingly incorporated Islamic characteristics directly into their music, either for personal or creative reasons or for *dakwah*, to bring more people to Islam (see van Zanten, Notosudirdjo, Weintraub, and Capwell in this volume).

Popular music performance, with its celebrity culture and potential power to move an audience to commit supposedly immoral acts, has often led *ulama* (religious leaders/scholars) to disapprove of and censor, if possible, certain music styles or performers. One infamous case involves the superstar *dangdut* artist Inul Daratista, who endured condemnation in the early 21st century because of her suggestive and erotic "drilling" (*mengebor*) dance moves (see Weintraub in this volume). Most of the public response to this criticism, ironically, was strongly in support of Inul, as she is called, and she has subsequently been allowed to perform freely throughout the country. Many citizens, including public leaders, cited a concern for freedom of expression in this era of *reformasi*, and one prominent Muslim intellectual, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, pointed out that religious leaders were "over-moralizing" in attempting to impose religious norms on all aspects of life (Abshar-Abdalla in Feay and Hooker 2006, 132). Such controversies are never definitively settled and illuminate the dynamic discussions ongoing in Indonesian music.

Popular culture has grown immense and become a major force in Indonesia in the creation and dissemination of contemporary Islam, especially for much of the younger generation. Popular artists and music are not the only influences propelling this movement; comic magazines, ring tones, blogs, and the entire mediascape are helping to shape notions of Islamic behavior and practice. A wide variety of feature films promoting contemporary Islamic values, some utilizing such music forms as *nasyid*, have been produced and successfully marketed. Self-help, talk-show, variety, and motivational television programs, featuring learned

Muslims young and old offering solutions to contemporary problems, flood the airwaves, particularly during the month of Ramadan. Global media empires that operate in Southeast Asia, like MTV and Rolling Stone, are cognizant of the role of Islam. Overtones of piety and clean living are evident in *Indonesian Idol*, the national version of *American Idol* (derived from British *Pop Idol*), which has, not surprisingly, developed a large following. While the marriage of religion with popular culture has fostered a new and immense industry intersecting commerce, technology, and religious practitioners and professionals that mediate Islam for 21st century youth, the events of this media-driven practice, like other activities in the public eye, are closely watched by MUI (*Majelis Ulema Indonesia*, the Council of Muslim Religious Leaders) and other religious organizations to determine permissibility. As popular culture continues to percolate, the anti-pornography legislation passed in 2008 provides yet another tool for religious councils and patriarchal leaders to monitor songs for textual content and bodies, particularly female bodies, for physical display (see note 18). This legislation, though now enforced in parts of the country, has its detractors and is being debated in the media and on the street.

Organization of This Volume

This book is divided into four fluid, sometimes overlapping, sections: I. Tensions and Change, II. Mysticism and Devotion, III. Global Currents and Discourse, and IV. Contemporary Performative Worlds. Throughout our diverse set of case studies a number of related themes emerge: for example, the understanding of history, regional diversity, the relationship of music to the state, debates on music and Islam, musical aesthetics, gender, mysticism and spiritual experience, individual agency versus communal action, and globalization/internationalization. Though the writing styles often diverge, this set of issues both provides consistency in this volume and reveals multiple perspectives on similar topics.

Part I – Tensions and Change explores both the maintenance of traditional arts through time in particular locations and the negotiations between forces, such as the government and religious boards, to preserve and/or modify such arts. The opening chapter, titled "Past and Present Issues of Islam within the Central Javanese Gamelan and Wayang Kulit," confronts issues of debate on music with regard to two of Indonesia's most prominent performing arts. Sumarsam, the author, is a Javanese musician, gamelan leader, historian, *dhalang* (shadowplay puppeteer), and Wesleyan professor for two decades. His essay, based in part on reflexive ethnography and lived experience, critiques the histories of Islam and

music, traces the gradual development of Islam within Javanese performing arts, and analyzes the evolving 20th-century positions on the arts of the two largest Islamic organizations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. The chapter reveals the strategies for negotiating aesthetics and philosophies of Hinduism and Sufism and for establishing boundaries and sometimes rationalizing Indonesian expressive arts in postcolonial times.

David Harnish's chapter, "Tensions between Adat (Custom) and Agama (Religion) in the Music of Lombok," provides a comprehensive look at the coming and growth of Islam, its splinter into traditionalist (here meaning nominal Muslims who embrace *adat* traditional customs/laws) and orthodox camps, and the accompanying evolutions in music over centuries on the island of Lombok, just east of Bali and once under the control of Balinese rajas. Central for the declining Waktu Telu (traditionalists) and rising Waktu Lima (modernist Muslims) among the Sasak population are the styles considered *halal* (global forms) and *haram* (gamelans), and the prohibitions attempted by religious leaders. The regional government has been a major player in establishing policies to preserve and guide the development of both traditional and Islamic music, and to formulate regional cultural/ethnic identity by decontextualizing traditional music, promoting its status as inoffensive cultural display and thus *halal*, and fostering new religious music to help modernize and nationalize a localized populace.

Part II – Mysticism and Devotion speaks more directly about musical practices, communities, and contexts that focus on the Arabic texts of Islam and disciplined Islamic spirituality. Anne Rasmussen's chapter, "The Muslim Sisterhood," describes the access that women have to Quranic texts as well as the systematization of Quranic studies in Indonesia, in contexts that range from women's study groups (*maejlis taklim*) to religious boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) to college-level institutions (the *Institut Ilmu al Qur'an*). It is well known from Rasmussen's other works on the topic that, in spite of Indonesia's position on the periphery in the Muslim world, Indonesians are recognized for their excellence in recitation, particularly in the musical *mujawwad* style, where reciters employ the musical modes of the Arab world with extraordinary virtuosity. Furthermore, there is probably no place in the Muslim world where women are as active in the business of religion. Indonesian women need not go through men to experience religion or, more importantly, to understand and interpret its texts. The activity of women in this realm prove that women are fully engaged in one of the most spiritual and mystical practices of the religion as well as in the intellectual activities of understanding, teaching, and debate.

In his chapter, "*Brai* in Performance: Devotion and Art in Java," Matthew Cohen, drawing upon both historic literature and contemporary ethnography, explores the varied representations of *brai*, a genre of mystical music performed

by groups of Islamic male and female mystics as part of a devotional practice that can lead to rapture. With the rise of modernist Islam, *brai* has sharply declined from a complex of social networks in the 19th century to only a handful of groups in Cirebon and neighboring areas of coastal Java. Due to misunderstandings and misrepresentations partially related to distinct spheres of private expressions of faith and public entertainments, the rural-based *brai* is often misidentified as a folk art, and its practitioners are either romanticized or, more frequently, demonized. This practice, with an emphasis on divine love and obliteration of the self for the divine, presents the challenges of a Sufic tradition in Indonesia, and Cohen records the tensions, the "rediscovery," and the attempts at folklorization of *brai* over recent decades. Cohen, more than other authors addressing practices with Sufi roots in this volume, articulates the problematic position of Sufism in Indonesia over centuries through his analysis of *brai* practitioners.

Uwe Pätzold's chapter, "Self-Defense and Music in Muslim Contexts in West Java," continues to explore the Sufi embodiment of spirituality within *pencak silat* self-defense arts as taught at Islamic boarding schools and teaching institutions. One of his main points is that the goals of training in these arts at teaching institutions (more secular) differ from those of *pesantren* boarding schools (religious). Pätzold unfolds the history of these arts and their importance as symbols during the resistance to Dutch colonization, and presents a dazzling array of movement forms and music accompaniment that mark these stylized martial arts traditions as either more religious or more secular. As in the situation described by Cohen, some teachers are criticized if they assume an authoritarian position as spiritual master. A practitioner himself, Pätzold's chapter expands his lengthy history of work on *pencak silat*, focusing primarily on issues of Islam, mysticism, and training. The intricate relationship between self-defense arts and Islamic ideology and practice is a phenomenon that distinguishes Islam in Southeast Asia from religious practice in South Asia and the Middle East.

Part III – Global Currents and Discourse addresses the national and transnational movements and articulations of contemporary ideas and debates on music and Islam in much of Indonesia. Charles Capwell's chapter, "From 'Dust' to Platinum: Global Currents through the Malay World of Musical Islam," is an outgrowth of his earlier research on the musical genre *gambus*, a music derived from the practice of Yemeni immigrants to Southeast Asia that became iconic of Southeast Asian Islam. In this volume, he explores the idea that such processes of globalization are multidirectional. His essay, which is informed theoretically by Charles Taylor's *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004) as well as by Arjun Appadurai's concept linking social life and the imaginary (1996), discusses the "research field" as a "contact space." Capwell focuses specifically on the music group Debu (lit. Dust), an eclectic anomaly comprising American and European expatriates

who moved to Indonesia and established a band because their sheikh had a mystical revelation compelling them to do so. Debu's work, particularly the platinum-selling "Mabuk Cinta" (Drunk with Love), their collection of international music styles and influences, and their successful reception, calls into question the common discourses on globalization and reveals significant developments and movements within Indonesian Islam.

Birgit Berg, in her contribution "'Authentic' Islamic Sound? *Orkes Gambus* Music, the Arab Idiom, and Sonic Symbols in Indonesian Islamic Musical Arts," discusses the unique and conflicting positions of Arabic music and language in Indonesia. Her dissertation research was conducted among the settlements of ethnic Arabs in the Gorontalo region of Sulawesi. For these ethnic Arab communities, *orkes gambus* music—small ensemble music featuring Arab-derived instruments including the *gambus* lute—is a celebratory and ethnic tradition. Throughout most of the archipelago, however, this music is performed and consumed within Islamic settings and considered Islamic, partially because of the instrumentation, the ethnicity of the performers, and the use of Arabic, the language of the Qur'an and the Prophet. Critics, who object to the claim that Arab vernacular popular music is anything more than just that, make a sharp distinction between *orkes gambus*, on the one hand, and *musik islami* on the other. Berg's work focuses on the power of sonic symbolism and aesthetics in the context of global and local religious affiliations and communities, and reveals the trends and tensions in religious expression and identity in a modern non-Arab Islamic nation.

Wim van Zanten's chapter explores "The Discourse on Islam and Music in West Java." He sets forth the distinctions between music activities connected to Islamic religious and cultural ceremonies, for example, the *adzan*, and the processes whereby non-Islamic music and other performing arts come to be considered as compatible with Islam. He states that music in West Java is not judged so much in terms of *halal* and *haram* but rather with the aesthetic criteria of beautiful and ugly. The band ath-Thawaf, led by composer Yus Wiradiredja, that is at the center of van Zanten's case study, performs Islam-inspired music that incorporates global music elements, Sundanese cultural elements, a diversity of instruments (including stringed instruments intended to symbolize a contemporary Islamic sound), and rich, devotional texts. Van Zanten discusses the ways in which ath-Thawaf's hybrid style, particularly in a rendition of the Islamic confession of faith, provides an example of how and why a variety of elements can be packaged and understood as Islamic.

Part IV – Contemporary Performative Worlds is the final section of the book and concentrates on such issues as modern and popular music, new hybrid musics, and overall performativity. Margaret Kartomi, who has conducted research over most of her lifetime in Sumatra, centers her chapter, "'Art with a Muslim Theme'

and 'Art with a Muslim Flavor,'" on the female song and dance genre known as *rateb meuseukat* in the western districts of Aceh in northwest Sumatra. Aceh, known as the "verandah of Mecca," is famous for its strong commitment to Islam, despite the ancestor and nature veneration that persists in its musical arts. *Rateb meuseukat*, unlike other dances, is performed by a row of women in a sitting position who sing and use intricate body percussion, slapping their chest, arms and legs in precise synchrony, as accompaniment. After explicating the history of this form with its familiar issues of music vis-à-vis Islam and the role of women in the performing arts (particularly if performing in front of men), Kartomi describes the two kinds of texts that the women can choose to sing: texts from Muslim liturgy, in which case the performance is considered a form of worship, or secular texts, then considered a form of entertainment. The latter form was used historically to welcome guests at official functions and campaigns; in postcolonial Indonesia, this form has been appropriated by government, corporations, and the mass media as a regional spectacle. The chapter provides deep details on this fascinating performance of gender—its challenges and tensions—through time, illustrates the Indonesian tendency to repackage traditional arts for spectacle, and reveals a myriad of local and regional issues in Aceh.

Franki Notosudirdjo explores an attempt at the creation of an Islamic "art music" for a relatively new community of Muslim intellectuals in Jakarta with his chapter, "Islam, Politics, and the Dynamic of Contemporary Music in Indonesia." He uses the compositions of Trisutji Kamal, a composition student of the Amsterdam Conservatory and professor at IKJ, the Jakarta Arts Academy, and their reception as a lens through which to evaluate this development. Notosudirdjo outlines the Suharto-era rise of the modernist Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICTM), and a pair of arts institutions: Taman Ismail Marzuki, a performing arts complex (the Jakarta Arts Center) that showcases modern arts from around the world, and IKJ, Institut Kesenian Jakarta, or the Jakarta Arts Institute, an institute for the education and patronage of the arts. The chapter focuses largely on Kamal's composition "Persembahan" (A Worship) as an example of an artistically successful hybrid emerging from this intellectual movement that combines Islamic elements and art music and blurs the lines between art and religion. Unique parts of the piece feature a religious text in Arabic, a mixed choir, and a set of *rebana* frame drums, which together give the impression of *qasidahan*, the activity of singing Arabic songs of praise, a rural *pesantren* tradition formerly denigrated by urban classes, now re-dressed for the proscenium stage. Notosudirdjo concludes that the new middle class, while accepting the idea of newly composed art music and the Islamic elements therein, is not prepared to embrace Muslim art music with the associated, respectful etiquette of the concert setting. By analyzing the intersection of religion, culture, ideology, and arts, Notosudirdjo illuminates a path also taken by many other successful

modern Indonesian artists who self-identify as Muslims, are largely Western-trained, and produce what Notosudirdjo calls "Islamic contemporary music," such as Dwiki Dharmawan (composer/conductor), Embie C. Noer (composer), and the New Jakarta Ensemble (experimental music group).

Andrew Weintraub, in his chapter "Morality and its (Dis)contents: Dangdut and Islam in Indonesia," investigates the most popular, and sometimes most controversial, musical style in Indonesia: *dangdut*. Although the precursors to this music prior to the 1960s are varied and include *gambus* and especially *orkes Melayu* (the Malay ensemble style of North Sumatra), *dangdut* really came to full fruition under its central pioneering star, Rhoma Irama. Weintraub examines the many positions and subgenres of *dangdut* and the public debate about morality in popular music that centers on singers' clothing, body movement, and song lyrics. Ironically, *dangdut* resonates with many Islamic characteristics, in both musical technique and stylistic nuance. For example, while *dangdut* is largely an amalgam of *orkes Melayu*, Hindi film music and Western rock, Arabic elements form an important component of the music and some of the best-known singers testify that training in Islamic chant (*tilawa*) is essential for mastering proper ornamentation and aesthetic. The influence of Rhoma Irama, who has used the music to communicate Islamic messages and as *dakwa* (bringing people to Islam), also lends a religious veneer to the music. While still a compelling figure, Irama's influence has waned substantially in 21st-century Indonesia, and the style has been dominated by female performers, including the well-known Inul Daratista, who use the form for dancing and pure entertainment. Weintraub's research, based on ethnographic work in the *dangdut* industry and interviews with Irama himself, illustrates the evolving continuum of ideas about morality and music.

Finally, Judith Becker writes the postscript for this volume. Becker is one of the pioneering scholars and professors of Indonesian music whose work as one of the leaders in the field of ethnomusicology has profoundly influenced all of the authors in this volume as well as generations of students interested in Southeast Asia and Indonesian music. In her epilogue, she provides a synopsis of each of the authors' chapters along with her commentary on the main issues emerging in the book and within Indonesia itself through the prism of her own experience.

Final Thoughts

We hope that the readers of this volume will begin, through these case studies, to savor the complexities of Islam in Indonesia, the positions of the arts, and the forces that have helped shape sociomusical and religious culture within the

country. Indonesia was perhaps once an Indic region, as defined by such scholars as Clifford Geertz and Benedict Anderson and earlier generations of orientalists, but this label no longer applies. Following Brakel (2004, 7) we suggest that Islam in Indonesia is an encounter between indigenous monistic and Islamic dualist worldviews and that this encounter may be heard and experienced in and through the performing and ritual arts. Although the various streams of animism, Hindu-Buddhism, Tantrism, and Sufism historically dissolved into an organic hybrid, religious reformers have struggled to identify, separate, and pass judgment on the various parts of the whole. The dynamic state and continuous evaluation of the processes of the Islamization of Indonesia and the localization of Islam is in part what makes the study of Islamic culture in Indonesia both fascinating and significant. Any reductive summary of Indonesian religion would dismiss the variety and constantly shifting religious experiences and identities of Indonesians in contemporary local, regional, national, and global society. It is not unusual for the most orthodox of Muslims to, on occasion, engage in rituals of pre-Islamic *adat*, while only nominally Muslim families may also participate in strict Islamic practices from time to time. The acts of preparing offerings when a volcano threatens to erupt, while also observing Friday prayers, while also visiting ancestral gravesites and shrines to pray before final exams, and while also engaging in modern, mediated, global popular Islam on the Internet are the strategies that make socioreligious behavior characteristically Indonesian.

In any case, Indonesian Islam and Indonesian Islamic musics cannot be ignored in the postcolonial world. While we are not interested in Islamizing Indonesian musics—that is, offering a counter theory focusing solely on Islam in the development and maintenance of music forms—we instead re-position and analyze music cultures within the contexts of Indonesian Islam. "Islams" and "musics" are not entities that exist in a vacuum; they must be set in operation, practiced, (re) interpreted, and lived. Human agency—decisions made and actions taken by people in specific contexts—is fundamental to understanding how these phenomena have developed in particular regions at particular times in particular ways.

We hope that our work attracts a wide readership that it articulates the diverse and complex realities of Indonesia, while positioning Islam and music in multiple-mirrored ways. Indonesia is home to more Muslims than any other country, with unique and progressive approaches to religious and arts practices, and Indonesians are increasingly visible as students and professors of Islamic studies around the world. It is now time for scholars and students of Islamic studies to also start paying serious attention to the rich Islamic sound worlds of Indonesia. This book may serve as a gateway to a new way of understanding not only Indonesian Islamic musics but also Indonesian Islam and the interdependence of religion and music.

Notes

1. A pivotal moment in the fascination with Indonesian culture in the West was the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1889, where the French composer Claude Debussy famously encountered gamelan music. This experience transformed his ideas about music and launched a further passion among Westerners for exotic texture, timbre, tonality, and instrumentation (see further Cooke 1998). The first gamelan in North America came with the Columbia Exposition in Chicago in 1893, and has been since housed in the Field Museum.

2. The oft-repeated phrase "Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world" is problematic for some scholars and artists in and outside the country because Indonesia is technically a secular state. Pakistan (Muslim majority) and, following close behind, India (Muslim minority) are second and third after Indonesia in numbers of Muslims.

3. Brunei, with fewer than 400,000 people, is the only other Muslim majority country in Southeast Asia.

4. Achieving acknowledgement as partners in Islam has been a conundrum for both scholars, globally, and for practitioners within the country. For example, the Middle East Studies association or Middle East Studies programs may include educational opportunities, publications, or curricula that focus on Islam, that, due to the regional focus on the Middle East and Arab world, exclude South and Southeast Asia or admit these regions only with a caveat.

5. The primary orthodox school (*madhab*) in Indonesia has been Shafi'i.

6. Tantrism is an esoteric tradition found in Hinduism and Buddhism, among a few other religions, in which the universe consists only of the divine energy of Godhead, and rituals aim to channel that energy within the human microcosm in creative and emancipatory ways (White 2000, 9). See further Becker 1993.

7. About one percent of Indonesian Muslims are Shias.

8. Formed in 1975, the MUI (funded through the Ministry of Religion) often issues *fatwas* (rulings) to maintain and shape Islamic practice in Indonesia and to identify movements, institutions, or individuals that it feels are not in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunna (actions/customs established by the Prophet). Some of the work of this group is rather mundane and practical, for example making decisions about food products that are acceptable according to Muslim dietary restrictions. But, their ability to censor the behavior of the citizenry is quite powerful. Mystical groups, if decreed heretical by MUI, have been raided and shut down by government forces, as are any groups practicing or advocating gambling, alcohol, sexual immorality, pornography, violence against women, and corruption, among other social ills. Other religious boards include *Dewan Dakwah Indonesia* (the Indonesian Council for Propagation of Islam) and *Dewan Masjid Indonesia* (Indonesian Council of Mosques), among many others. See Hefner (2002) for more complete lists of moderate and radical Islamic organizations.

9. Occasionally implemented in pre-colonial times, the national government authorized *Shari'a* in the Sumatran province of Aceh in 2004 as an adjunct to, not a replacement for, national civil and criminal law. Several provinces have adopted parts of *Shari'a* and both

Indonesia and Malaysia include provisions of detailed, *Shari'a*-inspired personal laws administered by state-sponsored agencies (Hooker 2006, 150). Salim (2004) states that this "call from below" for *Shari'a* (rather than "from above" by governing bodies) in Aceh and elsewhere resulted from a reassertion of Muslim self-identity. In Aceh, the politicization of *Shari'a* was led by the demand for self-determination and was in part an Acehnese response to what was viewed as suppression of Islamic identity and exploitation of their lands and resources by the Indonesian government from the 1950s onwards, leading to frequent separatist fighting from the 1970s through 2004. Many cultures "from below" call for implementation on the grounds that *Shari'a* is believed to be a divine blueprint for life.

10. The dyad can be generalized as scripturalists, on the one hand, and modernists and traditionalists, on the other. Both have their own Islamic education institutions (see further Saeed 1999). Some of the former follow the Hanbali school of Sunni Islam and/or ardent Islamist Wahhabism (or Salafism); individuals and organizations in Saudi Arabia have been instrumental in funding a variety of organizations in Indonesia.

11. The doctrinal differences of Muhammadiyah and NU are not polar opposites and have narrowed considerably over recent decades.

12. NU has generally institutionalized Sufi-related (mystical Islam) music practice in their boarding schools.

13. A movement toward greater orthodoxy in religious practice over recent decades can be seen in many countries across the globe; it is not at all restricted to Southeast Asia, South Asia, or the Middle East.

14. The situation leading up to this event is extremely complicated, involving the military and its many factions, then-president Sukarno, his internal and external allies and opponents, his successor Suharto, China, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), the Nahdlatul Ulama organization (NU), and the Central Intelligence Agency among other forces. Many believe that the incident, which started with the killings of select generals, may have initially been a leftist strike against the military or only an internal military squabble, but quickly spun out of control as other forces launched disinformation campaigns. The accusation that communists/leftists had attempted a coup led to mass killings by the military, vigilante gangs, and such organizations as NU (see Kahin 2003 and Ricklefs 2001) and radically changed the political direction of Indonesia.

15. These included Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism (Confucianism was added as a recognized religion in January 2006). Today, Indonesians carry national identity cards that list their religion. Followers of unrecognized faiths are sometimes barred from establishing houses of worship. Atheism is unacceptable and interfaith marriage is highly problematic. The rationale for religious registration was that communists were secular and could not embrace a true world religion.

16. See Hefner (2002) for a thorough analysis of Suharto's reaching out to both moderate and radical Islamic groups from the mid-1980s until his downfall in the late 1990s.

17. Diatribes regarding musical practice abound in early literature on music written in medieval Mesopotamia (see Sawa 1987 and Shiloah 1997) and acknowledge that while music is practiced and valued, musicians, practicing music, and associating with musicians

are discouraged. The writings of 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century European orientalists, for example Villoteau, Lane, and Farmer (see Racy 2006), on music in the Middle East also take up debates on musical practice. For contemporary analyses see, for example, works by al-Faruqi 1985, Sakata 1986, Nelson 1985, Danielson and Ringer 2002, and Doubleday and Neubauer 2006.

18. On October 30, 2008, the parliament passed contested anti-pornography legislation that may have ramifications for a variety of traditional performing arts from dances (and dance movements and costumes) to shadow puppetry to the improvised banter of clowns in theatrical contexts. Several political parties and leaders opposed the bill (which was supported largely by Islamic parties and organizations), and, in fact, these forces succeeded in briefly tabling the legislation for minor revisions. The eventual impact and enforcement of this legislation are currently unclear. As of this writing, enforcement has resulted in closing a select few performances and detaining dancers of the *dangdut* and *jaipongan* styles in Java.

19. Here, we consider neither the Pleistocene period (with Homo erectus, or "Java Man"), nor the early Austronesian-speaking cultures of Indonesia's prehistory that arrived around 2000 BCE mostly from Taiwan (see Taylor 2003) and pushed Melanesians eastward, nor the early famous possible instruments (more likely, ritual currency or status symbols) known as Dongson period bronze kettledrums. Trade in or for these drums may go back to 500 BCE.

20. These two religions are, of course, related, since the historical Buddha was born and raised a Hindu prince. In Indonesia, monuments/statues and literature of one religion were constructed or utilized by empires of the other; further, aesthetic goals and spiritual orders often combined both and many emerging practices (e.g., Tantrism) were similar. Buddha is also considered an incarnation of the Hindu god Wisnu (Vishnu) further tying the religions together.

21. This exodus may have been more gradual than commonly understood. Hinduism did not disappear in the courts of East Java until Blambangan fell in the 18th century. The religion, however, would remain in mountainous areas to this day. The Tengger people, among others, have largely retained Hindu practices (see Hefner 1995). Recently, a Hindu revival movement has claimed new converts in Javanese areas near old Hindu monuments, for example, near the previous East Java Hindu courts (see, for example, Beatty 1999).

22. Banten is believed to have been founded by one of the famous *wali sanga* Muslim evangelists, Sunan Gunungjati, who later went on to establish Cirebon.

23. The *bedhaya* ritual dance, for instance, symbolically marries the sultan with the female divine and conflates this union with the Hindu deities, Siwa and Durga (Becker 1993, 151-64). Becker suggests that gamelan music, to some practitioners and scholars, embodies multiple layers of significance, including concealed meanings; in performance, gamelan music generates multiple states of being through connecting tonal relations with *cakra* points on the body, and may be iconic of cyclic Hindu-Buddhist conceptions of time (see 1981 and 1993).

24. *Serat* derives from the Arabic *sira*, story or epic; *Menak* (noble) refers to Prabu Menak, the main character of the story, also known as Amir Hamza or Jayaprana (Jayengprana), the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad.

25. In his discussion on the early Islam-associated gamelan *sekati*, Kunst allows that during the time of his early 20th-century research an "Islamitic revival" was ongoing with an "unfriendly attitude" toward "ancient national music" (267). He then proposes that members of the Muhammadiyah organization responsible for much of this new attitude follow in the "footsteps of the great predecessors," the *walis* (nine original saints), who embraced the arts both for spiritual purposes and for spreading Islam (ibid). He also states that certain classes of persons in Banten were forbidden to listen to gamelan because a well-known saint hated music (290), and briefly outlines the Islamic-style music of the *terbang* frame drum (216–17, 379). Otherwise, Islam is almost entirely absent from his lengthy report. While this may reveal a bias dismissing Islam, the larger point is the minimal impact of Islam on Javanese music.

26. In contradicting Kunst and a body of scholars that assert a maintenance of Hindu-Buddhist tradition, Woodward (1989, 3) declares that the "triumph" of Islam in Central Java was complete, that Islam is the predominant force in religious beliefs and rites, and that Islam shapes the character of social interaction and daily life. He adds that *wayang kulit*, despite being based on Hindu epics, is not particularly "Indic" in philosophy.

27. Many historians and anthropologists grapple with the precise character of Islam in Indonesia, when the religion arrived and where and how it took root, and most of their works critique the scholarship that predates their own. See, for example, Geertz (1960), Woodward (1996), Hefner (2002), Andaya (2006), and Ho (2006).

28. Reformist organizations occasionally challenge the preservation of these arts in modern Java.

29. Woodward (1989, 37) states that prophesy, considered more locally legitimate than history, is often inserted into these texts to justify dynastic change. For historians, gravestones have often been useful to determine when Islam began to make an impact, for instance on the names used (e.g., Indonesians using Arabic names), titles (if any), dates and calendars used (e.g., indigenous, Indian, and/or Islamic), and any proclamations.

30. Woodward (1996) describes the Islamization of political discourse and particularly the use of Arabic greetings among public officials and the incorporation of Islamic practice (like prayers) into civic events. Suharto's pilgrimage to Mecca in 1991 along with a huge delegation may also be seen as both a personal and political move on his part.

31. In some areas of Indonesia, the barrel drum *bedhug* was used to call people to prayer until sometime during the 20th century. In some areas of West Java, its sound preceded the *adzan* until at least the end of the century.

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Part 1

Tensions and Change

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1

Past and Present Issues of Islam within the Central Javanese Gamelan and *Wayang Kulit*

Sumarsam

Sumarsam's contribution to the volume addresses Islam in the context and development of the Javanese gamelan and wayang kulit *shadow play. The chapter uniquely combines the interpretation of primarily Javanese and European texts, the author's personal experience as teacher, performer, and practitioner of gamelan and* wayang kulit, *and an assessment of the public attitudes of the two largest Islamic organizations, Muhammadiyah and Nadhlatul Ulama, towards the arts. Gamelan and* wayang kulit, *both of which predate Islam and are thus not Islamic arts, were slightly modified with the coming of Islam; gamelan music developed in new ways and absorbed new contexts, while shadow puppets were abstracted away from human form and narratives incorporated Sufi themes. Sumarsam describes the ways in which Islamic leaders used these arts in select ways to popularize the religion, and how their efforts often resulted in hybridized and multilayered performance mediums. He explores the process of localization and identity and its resulting cultural products, proposed within a continuum of tangible and intangible transformation, and uses this theory to explain changes within gamelan and* wayang kulit. *Sumarsam highlights a controversial* wayang kulit *performance by a government official, who erred in his use of Arabic, to examine both the expectations of modern officials and the negotiated cultural authority of Islamic organizations in contemporary Indonesia.*

> The consideration of religious singing and instrumental music in the context of Islam is fraught with complexity and ambiguity (Neubauer & Doubleday 2001/12, 599).

The place of music in the life of the Islamic community is a vast topic and has long been debated in Islam's Middle Eastern homeland and beyond. It is

well known that the Arab world does not have a word for "music" that exactly matches that in Western perspective. Most Islamic cultures define sound phenomena as "music" or "non-music" according to its function or performance context (al Faruqi 1985, 6). The commonly used word "musiqa," borrowed from Greek, has had various meanings and is only used loosely to refer to certain secular musics (ibid.; see also Neubauer & Doubleday 2001/12, 599). Diverse terms, such as *ghina, sama, tatrib,* and *lawh* (or *lawn*), refer to music as defined by specific functional/contextual association (ibid.). In this regard, Islamic culture views music hierarchically, placing it between two poles: appreciated and disapproved genres. This categorization defines Quranic and religious chants as non-*musiqa* of the most appreciated and legitimate (*halal*) genres, and pre-Islamic or non-Islamic music and sensuous music as *musiqa* of controversial and illegitimate (*haram*) genres (ibid.; see also 599). In between these poles is a cluster of music forms that may fall somewhere in a *halal-haram* continuum.[1] Different leaders and Islamic schools of thought have added their own ideas, making the topic of Islam and music even more complex. In the most general sense, Muslims who favor a legalist interpretation of Islam are always hostile toward music, while Sufi orders have a positive stance toward music, even employing it as conduit to reach union with God.

As Islam spread over many different parts of the world after its birth in the 7th century, Islamic music and musical ideologies were localized and hybridized accordingly; hence, the considerations became even more fraught with complexity and ambiguity. These arguments came and took shape in Indonesia in various ways. This chapter discusses the impacts of Islam within two of the most featured traditional performing arts in Central Java, namely gamelan and *wayang kulit*, the shadow puppet play, both of which preceded the coming of Islam and expanded or changed as a result of cultural Islamization. I will explore these issues and their relevance to gamelan and *wayang kulit* from the 16th century through the 20th century.

One factor complicating the issues is that before the expansion of Islam in the 16th century, Indonesian (particularly Javanese) culture had developed largely as a result of encounters with the Indian religions of Buddhism and Hinduism. These encounters had significant impact locally. Indonesian traditional culture essentially became a syncretistic mixture in which Buddhism and Hinduism were absorbed into the complex matrix of indigenous culture. In Java, more than elsewhere, Hinduism and Buddhism promoted the development of social, political, and religious life, and especially of literary and artistic endeavors. The Indian writing system, poetry, and Hindu epics were adapted and localized by the Javanese. Various kinds of existing performing arts

were impacted positively by the new religions. Notably, the Indian epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* caused Javanese performing arts and literature to flourish.

In light of these developments, it should not be surprising that the cultural transformation caused by Islamization is vast and complex. To guide this discussion, I propose that the cultural transformation of Islam in Java can be explained in two ways: tangible and intangible transformation. Tangible transformation is a process in which elements of the home culture are clearly adapted into the practice of the imposing culture; intangible transformation is a process in which elements from the home country are indirectly and derivatively transformed into a cultural practice of the imposing culture. In the course of this process there are transformations and resultant cultural products that fall all along this polarized continuum.

Islam and the Early Development of Gamelan

The lack of evidence makes it impossible to accurately reconstruct the early history of Javanese music. A contemporary gamelan is known as a large ensemble consisting of predominantly tuned, bronze percussion instruments, such as metallophones, hanging gongs, and kettle gongs. No evidence of a large gamelan ensemble can be found during the early history of Java. Only a few gamelan-like instruments are depicted on the walls of the 9th-century Central Javanese Buddhist monument, Borobudur (see Introduction). More gamelan instruments are depicted on the walls of East Javanese temples, such as the 14th-century Panataran. The absence of local evidence from the early Islamized Java in the 16th to 17th centuries prevents us from reconstructing gamelan history at that time. Further, reports by Europeans during the same period give us only tantalizing glimpses of musical life. What we can verify from available evidence is the existence of small ensembles in which singing might or might not have been included (see Sumarsam 1995). Ensembles consisting of gong-type instruments seem to have been increasingly conspicuous, as can be seen in a few drawings in both Banten and Tuban during the 16th and 17th centuries (Woodfield 1995; Reid 1988; Kunst 1973), and in descriptions of an ensemble in the 17th-century Mataram kingdom (Goens 1856 [1656]).

Scant data is extant on early ensembles consisting of gong- (*pencon*) and slab- (*wilahan*) type instruments. Perhaps gamelan *sekaten* is one of the earliest ensembles featuring this mixture. This ensemble consists of three sets of gong-type instruments (a pair of *gong ageng* hanging gongs, *bonang* gong-chime, and a pair of *kempyang* kettle-gongs), a series of slab-type metallophones (a pair of low-octave

demung, four mid-range *saron*, and a pair of high-octave *peking*), and a large hanging drum (*bedhug*).

According to Javanese tradition, gamelan *sekaten* arose in the 16th century during the early history of Islamized Java when Javanese political and cultural power was located in Demak, at the center north-coast of Java. It is said that a *wali* (Javanese Islamic saint)[2] was responsible for the creation of this ensemble. Performing this gamelan to attract people to convert to Islam is a common explanation for its use and development. Warsadiningrat explains:

> Kangjeng Sunan Kalijaga, a wali of Javanese descent who was accomplished in all fields of knowledge, suggested that in order to be successful, the plan [to persuade people to convert to Islam] must make use of [an aspect of] Javanese culture loved by the Javanese people and regarded by them as sacred, namely, the gamelan. A gamelan would be placed near the mosque, and would be played very loudly, so that it could be heard from afar and could be heard especially clearly from nearby. Surely, many people would come to the mosque to see and hear the gamelan, for it had been a long time since the people had heard one that they really enjoyed, and furthermore they regarded the gamelan as venerable and sacred. He who would come would be accepted [into Islam], he would be told to cleanse and purify himself before praying. This cleansing is called *wulu*. When he had cleansed himself, he would be taught to recite the *sahadat kalih* (confession of religious faith)—in Arabic, *syah hadadtin*. Then his conversion to Islam would be confirmed (Warsadiningrat 1987, 55, translated by Susan Walton).

Warsadiningrat goes on to say that Sunan Kalijaga was assigned to construct the gamelan and to compose pieces for it. Tuned in *pelog* (Javanese seven-tone system with varying intervals) and consisting of only loud-sounding instruments, the gamelan was made larger than usual. The introduction of each piece consists of a long solo *bonang* (gong-chime) melody punctuated by other instruments at important structural points. This introduction is like an *imam* reciting prayers for a ritual, while other instruments are like participants saying "amen" intermittently. The *walis* decided that the gamelan would be played in the week of the *garebeg* religious festival to commemorate the birth of Prophet Muhammad. The gamelan is called gamelan *sekaten*, a term said to derive from the phrase *syah hadadtin*.

There is no evidence to support Warsadiningrat's story of the origin of the *sekaten* ensemble, but linking the origin and use of gamelan *sekaten* to the rise of Islam is common among the Javanese and scholars of Javanese culture. In addition,

the story itself evokes the mythos of the ensemble, elevating gamelan instruments as sacred objects to be worshipped. Here we find the implementation of the traditional Javanese concept of power—the worshipping of *pusaka* (heirlooms), or what are believed to be magically charged items, to enhance one's power or to receive blessings or cures—to be appropriated and enhanced by Islam; hence, we have an Islam-Java ideological/philosophical hybrid.

It is a commonly held opinion that gamelan *sekaten* was created in the 16th century, when Javanese cultures were generally flourishing and the north coast area became both the political/cultural center and the heart of economic wealth. In other words, the rising Islamic elites and booming economy led to a cultural florescence. Historical accounts suggest that, as a consequence of the downfall of the mighty Hindu-Javanese Majapahit empire and the resulting cessation of tax collection, the north-coastal towns became prosperous. Ras explains:

> The elite consisting of traders in these towns had bourgeois-progressive perspectives and aspirations with international orientation. This caused the development of culture. During the North-coast period, Javanese culture experienced a renewal: many old traditions were dropped, changed with new traditions and new ideas received from the outside world that were then assimilated.
>
> Since the 15th century, the Muslim population in many North-coastal towns was gradually increasing; by the 16th century, Islam was clearly dominant. In spite of this development, people's favorite entertainment remained indigenous Javanese performances: dances and gamelan music, *wayang* theater, singing, and so forth. We know this fact from rather old Javanese texts, such as *Suluk Wujil*, and also from sources outside of Java. We learn from *Hikayat Lembu Mangkurat* from South Kalimantan that, "After the king of Kauripan in Candi Agung sits down sadly for some time, the Prime minister Lau says: 'I beg your pardon your majesty, I heard news from many trading sailors that in the kingdom of Giri people are very noisily entertaining themselves day and night with all kinds of wayang and mask-dance performance, gambus [lute], and dancing, because the king is very clever, according to people. If your majesty is interested, let us send a messenger to Giri, so that your sadness will be brought to happiness'." Then it is said that Patih Lau was summoned to go to Giri, near the town of Gresik, "to borrow people who are skillful in performing *wayang*, mask-play, dance, *gambus*, *joged* dance, and *gendot* dance." This kind of evidence was strengthened by Javanese texts from Serat Sastramiruda. From this book we know that the renewal of wayang—the appearance of the puppet

> and the structure of the story and its gamelan accompaniment—started from the Coastal period, and was sponsored by walis, especially Sunan Giri, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Kudus, and Sunan Kalijaga (Ras 1985, vii).

The description of lively performance activity in Giri strengthens the thesis of a cultural florescence in the north-coastal area. Evidence indicates that Gresik, near Giri, was one of the earliest places for gamelan making. In his *History of Java*, Raffles mentions that Gresik was the principal center of gamelan manufacturing: . . . .“and the gongs in particular furnish a valuable article of export. Every native chief in authority has one or more gamelans, and there are more or less perfect sets in all the populous towns of the eastern provinces” (1982 [1816], 471).

Contemporaneous with Raffles’s writing, a Dutch official (later, in 1825, Resident), Cornets de Groot (1852), reported on various types of gamelans in the possession of the Gresik Residency. He lists eight of them: gamelan *salendro*, gamelan *mentaram* or *pelog miring*, gamelan *surabayan* or *surapringgan*, gamelan *kodhok ngorek*, gamelan *cara bali* or *wangsul*, gamelan *sekaten*, gamelan *senen*, and gamelan *serunen*.[3] Although he wrote his report in 1822–23, he makes reference to “the situation as it existed quite some time in the past…” (Kumar 1996, 111). While it is not possible to ascertain the precise dates of the making of Gresik gamelans, what is relevant to our inquiry is the fact that Gresik was one of the north-coastal towns inhabited by Islamic commercial elites, information that demonstrates a parallel between the rise of Islam and the expansion and proliferation of gamelan instruments and performance.[4]

To reiterate, an intensive cultural development in the north-coastal areas of Java occurred simultaneously with and as a result of the rising of elite Islamic commercialism in the area during the early period of Islamization in Java. Reports about gamelan activity and gamelan making in Gresik illustrate the parallel development. It is also in the context of the early Islamization of Java that scholars discuss the development of Javanese *wayang*.

Islam, Wayang Stories, and the Stylization of Wayang Puppets

Evidence has conclusively shown that *wayang* existed long before the arrival of Islam in Indonesia. It is possible that the shape of *wayang* puppets was in parallel with the style of human depiction on the walls of old Javanese temples (Wagner 1988[1959]). In this regard, three-dimensional human figures are commonly found in drawings on the walls of temples, such as the 9th-century Buddhist

monument, Borobudur, and the 9th-10th-century Hindu temple, Prambanan. These figures closely represent human anatomy. The posture usually faces to the front, and the attire depicted matches men's and women's clothing of the time. We find these styles of representation in Central Java during the period of its apogee as political and cultural power. When the center of culture and political power moved to East Java in the 11th century, a change of human depiction took place, from a three- to a two-dimensional style (ibid., 126–127; Holt 1967, 82–83; see drawing of human figures on the 14th-century Panataran temple and other old East Javanese temples). The features of human anatomy are somewhat sustained, however.

This East-Javanese style of human depiction is preserved in Balinese puppets (see Hobart 1987; Holt 1967; Wagner 1988[1959]). The assumption here is that, as a result of an intimate relationship between the two islands, this model of depiction was transferred from Java to Bali. Many such cultural elements were transferred to Bali, especially following the Islamization of Java, which caused an exodus to Bali of Javanese people who wanted to continue embracing the Java-Hindu religion. In the meantime, Javanese *wayang* puppets took a different course of development: further stylization of human depiction.

It is commonly believed that Islam contributed to this enhanced stylization. *Shari'a*-minded Islam considers music and figural imagery as seductive arts that compete with the Qur'an as a source of imaginative and visionary powers. The pervasive belief is that seductive arts can constitute idolatry, as the weak-minded may be tempted by figural imagery and music. The religious position on human depiction explains the lack of statues in mosques (though two dimensional figures are still allowed) and the preference for calligraphy and symmetrical abstract patterns (Hodgson 1977, 504). The assumption here is that the prohibition of seductive imagery brought about an extreme stylization of Javanese puppets, a stylization that was meant to extremely distort human anatomy to avoid problems and to keep *wayang* approvable. Made as a complete two-dimensional figure, a *wayang* puppet has long arms and stylized eyes (only one eye is usually depicted), stylized nose, mouth, hair, and ornately stylized attire. Thus, we can say that Islamic ideology inspired a revision of Javanese puppets. This is an intangible transformation of domesticating a foreign element, as the Islamic element cannot be seen clearly in the resulting product.

Another example of intangible transformation can be found in *wayang* stories. The majority of *wayang* stories are based on two Hindu epics: *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. In Java, stories based on the *Mahabharata* are far more popular than those of the *Ramayana*. In 1923, a Dutch scholar, J. Kats (in Brandon 1970, 11), observed that of the 180 Javanese *wayang* stories, almost 150 of them belong to the final part of the Pandhawa (five hero brothers) cycle of

Figure 1.1. The Balinese puppet, Bima, the second of the five heroic Pandhawa brothers from the Mahabharata epic. This puppet shows an older shape for *wayang* puppets, close to figures depicted on the walls in East Java (see, for instance, the photo of the relief at Candi Surawana on the companion website). (photo courtesy of Andrew McGraw)

the *Mahabharata* (the others are from the *Ramayana* or other cycles). Only one-third of the *Mahabharata*-based stories are set to the main part of the original Hindu epic, namely the Pandhawa's conflict with their cousins, the Kurawa (ibid., 12); about two-thirds are set during the time the Pandhawas ruled Amarta. This is the beginning of the epic, which in the original is given only scant treatment (ibid.). This means that the majority of the stories are the creation of Javanese *dhalang*s, who base their performance on a minor part of the original epic.

Traditionally, *wayang* stories have been passed down orally from one generation of *dhalang* to another; the lack of written transmission makes it difficult to trace the development of *wayang* stories. While I contend that aspects of Islam have entered into *wayang* stories, this is not easy to demonstrate. Some evidence, however, from 18th- and 19th-century court literature helps trace subtle Islamic transformations of *wayang* stories. Court poets (*pujangga*) wrote this literature

Figure 1.2. The Balinese puppet, Arjuna, the third Pandhawa brother. This puppet shows an older shape for *wayang* puppets, close to figures depicted on the walls in East Java (see, for instance, the photo of the relief at Candi Surawana on the companion website). (photo courtesy of Andrew McGraw)

during the period of what scholars call the renaissance of classical literature (Pigeaud 1967, 1, 235). This development came after the permanent divisions of the former court of Mataram into two major and two minor courts, as a result of many decades of power struggles among the princes. The permanent divisions brought about a reasonably peaceful atmosphere, during which time court *pujangga* renewed their writing interests. In doing so, the *pujangga* had two resources available to them: Hindu-Javanese and Islamic literature (see Simuh 1995, 151–169). For example, Yasadipura I rewrote treatises based on the Hindu-Javanese *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, and Ronggawarsita rewrote the monumental treatises that were based on the *Mahabharata*. The same *pujangga* wrote several treatises, using Islamic literature as inspiration, including *Cabolek*, *Centhini*, *Tajusalatin*, and other works. It is from some of these literary works that we learn of aspects of Islam incorporated into *wayang* stories.

Figure 1.3. The Javanese puppet, Bima, showing an extreme stylization of human anatomy and representing an intangible transformation of Islam in Javanese *wayang*. (photo by the author)

Laurie Sears devotes one chapter of her book, *Shadows of Empire: Colonial Discourse and Javanese Tales*, to "Hearing Islam in 'Hindu-Javanese' Tales" (1996, 34–74). As she rightly mentions, the Javanese believe that the elder Pandhawa brother, Yudhistira, has a powerful amulet: Kalimasada. The name "Kalimasada" derives from *kalimah sahadat*, the Islamic profession of faith. In another example, she observes that some gods in *wayang* puppets wear Persian-style turbans and shoes. She also suggests that the concept of *wahyu,* originally from the Arabic *wahy* (a sign of spiritual and religious merit), became an important theme of many *wayang* stories. Her feature example, however, is a mystical teaching found in some *wayang* stories: *sastrajendrayuningrat* or *sastrajendra*. Most *dhalang* consider this mystical teaching to have a power to exorcise defilement. *Ilmu wirasat*, or the knowledge of human character based on different parts of the body (physiognomy), is an important part of the teaching. Based on a 19th-century Javanese treatise, *Dermagandhul*, Drewes (quoted in Sears, ibid.) observes that this *ilmu* (knowledge, science) is drawn from the Islamic book

Figure 1.4. The Javanese puppet, Arjuna, showing an extreme stylization of human anatomy and representing an intangible transformation of Islam in Javanese *wayang*. (photo by the author)

Tajusallatin. The point here is that, without most people realizing it, subtle Islamic elements entered *wayang* performance.

Sears further briefly mentions the story of *Dewa Ruci* (also known as *Bima Suci*), which I elaborate below. This story represents one of the best examples of how Islamic mysticism entered *wayang* performance. Unlike other stories, we can confirm this transformation through the study of an 18th-century Javanese text, *Serat Cabolek*. From this text and the contemporary performance of the story we learn that *Dewa Ruci* incorporates Islamic mystical experience based on the Sufi doctrine on the perfection of man. Here is a summary of the episode.

Bima, the second of the Pandhawa brothers, is instructed by his spiritual teacher, Durna, to search for the water of life. First, he is directed to find the water in Mt. Candramuka where two giants, who are actually transformed gods

testing his will, attack him. Bima repels and kills the giants. Transforming back to gods, they advise him that there is no water of life in this mountain. Bima returns and complains to his teacher, who is very happy that he has passed the first test of will and loyalty to his teacher. Then Bima is instructed to find the water in its true location: underneath the ocean. Before leaving, Bima asks permission from his brothers and family, who are concerned with his decision. Plunging himself into the ocean, Bima is attacked by a giant *naga* (serpent). He kills the *naga* with his thumbnail. He then meets a dwarf god (*dewa bajang*) named Dewa Ruci. Below is a summary of the most essential part of the story.[5]

> Dewa Ruci asks Bima to enter his stomach. Bima laughs, wondering how he (with his large body) can enter his small body. Dewa Ruci replies, "Which is larger, you or the Worlds and all this that it contains; together with its mountains, oceans and forces, all without difficulty could enter my stomach." Bima obeys, entering Dewa Ruci's stomach through his left ear. Inside, Bima sees boundless ocean. Then Bima describes further what he sees, including walking through empty, unidirectional space and so forth. Dewa Ruci speaks again: "Do not move, [but] observe carefully whatever appears to you." Bima replies that all that appears to him has disappeared. He goes on to say: "All that I can see now is four things: black, red, yellow [and] white." Dewa Ruci says gently: "That which you first saw, a radiant light, without knowing its name, is the *pancamaya* and this is the reality of the heart." Dewa Ruci goes on pointing out the power of the heart, its efficacy, and its vision—all signifying Reality. Upon hearing Dewa Ruci's words, Bima smiles with a contented heart. Then Dewa Ruci continues to explain. "As for those colors black, red, yellow, and white, they are dangers to the heart and are part and parcel of the material world. As for these three qualities of heart, they present good deeds, but one who frees himself from them certainly will gain union with the Hidden One." . . . . Then Dewa Ruci explains the meaning of four colors as they embedded in the heart. "Black is the most powerful, it gives rise to anger and hate which spreads and increases in malice. It is this quality of the heart which impedes and blocks the path to virtue. . . . As for red it points the way to evil desires. All evil desires proceed from it. . . . As for yellow it has the strength to overpower any desire leading to virtue, deeds which can bring about success are hindered by the heart infected with yellow. . . . Only white is the reality of the heart at peace and wholly pure and has the power of happiness. It is this white

alone that can accept indications of the Reality of all forms; it is the place on which the favor is bestowed which leads to eternal union with the Hidden One."

It is a commonly held opinion that this episode is inspired by a mystical path drawn from Sufism found in the Javanese mystical sect (Woodward 1989). The emphasis on the reality of the heart suggests the importance of "Heart" as Sufis understand it: that is to say as the very center of our being, the meeting-place of soul and mind (Burckhardt 1980, xi). The mention of four colors, which in Javanese mysticism symbolize *nepsu* (passions), is related to the *nafs* (lower or animal soul) in the Qur'an: *lawwamah* (self accusing), *ammarah* (evil), *mutmainnah* (peaceful), and *malhammah* (morally ambiguous).

The description of mystical union that often appears in the dialogue of *wayang* scenes and Javanese mysticism, such as *manunggaling kawula lan gusti* (union of servant and Lord) and *kasampurnaning dumadi* (perfection of life), also remind us of Sufis' essential oneness with God (see Nicholson 2002).[6] Whereas the mystical path to achieve enlightenment is inspired by Sufism, the story of searching for the water of life is a Hindu story. This intangible cultural transformation shows a process of trans-cultural encounters (Java, Hindu, and Islamic) in which the receiving culture is compelled to find a new cultural identity of its own.

There are *wayang* forms that fall into the category of tangible cultural transformation: *wayang golek* or *wayang thengul*.[7] Here "*wayang*" refers to a general meaning of the word (i.e. "play," instead of "shadow play"). *Wayang golek* performance does not use a screen; hence, it has no shadow effect. It features three-dimensional puppets made of wood and clothes and uses stories of Islamic origin that the Javanese call Menak stories.[8] These center on a heroic figure, Amir Hamzah, an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad. According to tradition, *wayang golek* was created in the 16th century by one of the Javanese *wali*, Sunan Kudus, although direct evidence is not available. What we know from the study of Javanese literature is that the Islamic Amir Hamzah cycle came to Java through its Malay version in the late 17th century and that originally it was a Persian tale (Soebardi 1969, 90). It is not known if the creation of *wayang golek* happened before or after the introduction of the tales of Amir Hamzah.

The form and performance technique of Javanese *wayang golek* are the same as the celebrated Sundanese *wayang golek*, but the latter presents stories from the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. However, Javanese *wayang golek* became neither as popular as Sundanese *wayang golek* nor as Javanese *wayang kulit*. Nowadays one rarely can see the performance of *wayang golek* in East Java or Central Java, unlike in West Java where it is still common. I bring up this instance of Central and East

Javanese *wayang golek* to point out that this *wayang* falls in the category of tangible Islamic transformation since its stories are transparently of Islamic origin.

Continuing Dynamic Interactions between Islam and Javanese Culture

So far the discussions on gamelan and *wayang* show a positive transformation of cultural development after Islamization, as Islamic material and ideology were absorbed and hybridized seemingly without problem. This is thanks to the influence of Sufism in the early Islamization of Indonesia that made it possible for Javanese people to form a positive stance toward their arts. This does not mean, however, that opposition toward this development did not exist.

I mentioned above that the issue of idolatry led to the extreme stylization of Javanese puppets. Elsewhere (Sumarsam 1995), I illustrate the debate on the appropriateness of music for Javanese *wayang* as it appears in the 18th-century literary work, *Cabolek*. Some passages from this literary work suggest that there was an experiment to accompany *wayang* not with gamelan, but with *terbangan*, an ensemble consisting chiefly of frame drums (Islamic-associated instruments originating from the Arab world). It is unclear whether such experimentation was occasional or singular. The passages below show one interlocutor stating that such hybrid practice was unusual. But the other disagrees, suggesting that the practice was very common.

> ....“My Lord, / every time you wish to have / a *gambuh*-dancer and *ringgit-tiyang* [play], / there is [always] one thing missing, and that is a tambourine, my Lord.” / I laughed heartily [and said]: / “Now *Adipati*, is there ever / a tambourine played to accompany a puppet-show? / I think it is unusual.” / The *Adipati* said:
>
> “As a matter of fact the *bupati* of Kudus / has a son-in-law, who is a *santri* [devout Islamic student] / his name is Ketib Anom; / he was the first to give performances with a tambourine my Lord.” / Then I burst into laughter, I thought he was joking.
>
> Yet Adipati Jayaningrat / said to m1e / that he [*Ketib* Anom] was a dalang as well as a wayang actor, / and that the Ketib Anom himself had played / the role of wong agung Menak [= Amir Hamzah] / who was a warrior and powerful on the earth (Soebardi 1975, 88–89).

The continuing passages suggest that performing *wayang* stories about the relatives of the Prophet Muhammad is forbidden. But reconciliation prevails: Such practice is permissible if the story is read rather than staged.

> . . . . "Please do not / hold a performance, my Lord, / in which the relatives of the Prophet of God take part / for this [means] rejecting their example.
>
> Indeed formerly my father, / your servant, was forbidden / to give a tambourine performance with *menak* repertoire, / this is not permitted in Madura. / Stories about *Muhamad* and *Mursada*, *Sapingi* and *Asmarasupi*, [may not be included] in the repertory. / [As for] the Madurese tambourine performance, my Lord, / [the story] is only read from a book, / this is not forbidden . . . . (ibid.)

Dynamic exchanges, including conflicting interests between older Javanese artistic forms and practices and Islamic ones, must have been very common during the decades of Islamic conversion. I describe this period of adjustment and exploration as a very complex and delicate process (Sumarsam 1995). The debates in *Cabolek* exemplify a conflict between Javanese Islam syncretism and orthodox Islam. The latter became stronger in the 19th century when more and more Indonesians were introduced to orthodox Islamic perspectives. This was a period of Islamic reformation. The reformation accelerated in the mid 19th century as a result of more and more returning Indonesian pilgrims from Mecca, who preached a so-called pure Islamic doctrine.

It is hard to say to what extent this reformation encountered opposition. But, we learn from literary works of the 18th and 19th centuries that performing arts became a prominent, at time contentious, topic of debate, revealing the syncretistic aspect of the forms. For example, the meanings of *dhalang* and *wayang* became controversial topics in literary works such as *Centhini* and *Gatholoco*. These literary works not only recognize the multi-dimensions and poly-modality of Javanese arts, but also show the necessity of bringing the topic out into the open in the midst of the proselytizing process of Islam. To illustrate, I will show the ways in which philosophical themes of *wayang* became hot issues. Let us consider the following passages from *Centhini*, an early 19th-century, multi-volume literary work that earns its reputation as an encyclopedia of Javanese culture.[9]

> The illuminated screen is the visible world. The puppets, which are arranged in an orderly fashion at both edges of the screen at the beginning of the play, are the different varieties and categories created by God. The *gedebog*, the banana trunk into which the dalang sticks his puppets whenever they have no role to fulfill in the play, is the surface of the earth. The *bléntjong*, the lamp over the head of the dalang behind the screen, which brings to life the shadows on the other side, is the lamp of life. The *gamelan*, the orchestra which accompanies the play with its motives and melodies fixed in accordance with the various persons and

> events projected on the screen, represents the harmony and mutual relationship of everything that occurs in the world (translated by Zoetmulder, in Zoetmulder 1971, 89)

The analogy of *wayang* with cosmology has become a common explanation of *wayang*'s symbolic meanings. Javanese Muslims also believe that the *dhalang* represents Allah; His creation is nothing more than a set of shadows cast on a screen (Woodward 1989, 218). Like Zoetmulder, Woodward asserts that to consider the puppeteer as a symbol of God is very common throughout the Islamic world of mysticism (ibid., 89). For example, the Sufi perspective of Ibn al-Farid, a contemporary of the great Ibn-al-'Arabi (1165–1240), testifies to this fact.

> Here Ibn al-Farid refers to the shadow lantern by means of which leather figures, moved by wands against a muslin curtain, are illuminated and made visible to the spectator on the other side in which the verses describe how the showman standing behind the screen displays his figures in every variety of action and causes the spectators to sympathize with the representation; yet when the screen is taken away, he alone is seen to be the real actor. This analogy guides us to the truth of things. The showman is the soul, the shadowy figures are the phenomena of sensation, the screen is the body; remove it and the soul is one with God (ibid., 218).

Reading passages from the *Centhini*, however, leads us to learn that the role of the *dhalang* and his *wayang* puppets is not as black and white as it might appear. Perhaps the lack of direct allegory of the *dhalang* representing God signifies even deeper cultural meaning. Debates on the meaning of *wayang* in another 19th-century literary work, *Gatholoco*, point to this fact. *Gatholoco* is a literary work from the genre of *suluk*, a didactic and moralistic work, which is written in poetic forms of the song-genre called *macapat*. Its storyline tells of a hero, Gatholoco, who wanders from one place to another. "Between bouts gambling and visits opium-dens, he engages in a series of vitriolic debates with 'orthodox' Islamic teachers on the true nature of God, man, the cosmos, Islam, and much more besides. In every case he triumphs by his wit and depth of *ngèlmu* (mystical knowledge)" (Anderson 1981, 112).

The debates on *wayang* begin with a question from Gatholoco (the main figure) to *santri* (devoted orthodox Muslims) about which of these four—*dhalang*, *wayang* puppet, *blencong* (lamp used for *wayang* performance), and *kelir* (screen)—comes first. One *santri* indicates that the screen must have been the first, since

before the *dhalang* and puppets are at hand and before the lamp is lit, the screen already exists. Another *santri* mentions the *dhalang* as the oldest; the screen and puppets are all his, and the lamp is lit and hung by him. The third *santri* suggests that puppets should be the oldest, since in planning out the performance, *wayang* is first pronounced, not the *dhalang*, *kelir*, or *blencong*. Gatholoco dismisses all three of these answers. He proposes that the oldest of the four is the *blencong*-lamp. He argues,

> "……
> For even though the screen's set up,
> *Wayang* and gamelan prepared,
> Musicians seated with
> The puppeteer, if all's still dark,
> The *dhalang's* at a loss,
> To pick unable, or reject,
> Or give the proper speech to any of the puppets.
>
> "The audience cannot recognize
> Each *wayang*-puppet for itself,
> And everything's mysterious,
> Obscure and hidden from the eye.
> It's when the *blencong* comes
> To life, and flares up brilliantly,
> That from the bottom to
> The top the screen is visible
> With the Kurawa [enemy cousins] and Pandhawa [hero brothers]
> left and right.
>
> The puppeteer beneath the lamp
> Can now select, can now reject
> Each *wayang*-puppet in its turn
> By weighing it reflectively.
> And, then he sets one forth
> Whose form is called 'the one-who-yearns.'
> What makes this possible
> Is the bright *blencong's* blaze on high;
> I think, therefore, the lamp is older than the rest.
>
> Now when the gamelan resounds,
> It's for the *wayang* that it's played.

The *dhalang* speaks, but yet his words
To Ki Wayang [the divinity] belong, not to [?] him.
The players, great and small
Obey the *dhalang*'s will, from slow
To rapid tempo, turn and turn
About. The *dhalang* rules indeed,
Yet he does merely move the puppets, speaks their words

"To serve Him who 'puts on' the show,
Whose honored name is Kyai Sepi [the divinity].
Sepi betokens 'what-is-not.'
His Being, when revealed, is true,
Eternal and unmoved,
With nothing over, nothing short,
Beyond the direction, place; and He it is who governs all
The movements of the puppets through the puppeteer"
(Anderson 1981, 135–136).[10]

This all suggests, as Zoetmulder (1971, 89) points out, that the true meaning of *dhalang* and *wayang* can only be "discovered only when one sees them as external of the various ways in which God acts and works in the world." For our purpose, the point here is that the philosophical theme of *wayang* became a topic of great interest during the 19th-century Islamic reformation. Opposing the reformation, the authors highlighted traditional, syncretistic, and mystical perspectives on *wayang*. Placing the lamp-light as the ancient and important one is in parallel with a Java-Islam mystical view. In both Javanese and Islamic mysticism, light is a sign of power.

Given the transformation of Islamic mysticism in *wayang*, there had to be a strong and hearty presence of traditional Javanese performing arts in the 18th- and 19th-century Islamic community and *pesantren* schools. This can be gleaned from the description of the life of Javanese performing arts from the literary works mentioned earlier. I would like to illustrate this point by quoting passages from *Centhini*. As I mentioned earlier, the story of *Centhini* revolves around adventurous wanderers who travel from one place to another. The following passages are about the wanderers, approaching and subsequently residing in the village/Islamic community of Wanamarta. As they approached the village, they felt that

95. . . . The village appears prosperous, / no different from the court-city. /
They are slowing down the pace [of their journey]. / Tears fill their eyes /

as they hear the harmonious sound of gamelan / *slendro* and *cara bali*. *Pelog* gamelan is softly sounded.

96. The gamelan sound comes from only three instruments, / *gambang*, *rebab*, and *suling*. / Their melodic treatments are not overlapping. / The sound of the whole gamelan set matches well together. / The gong sounds larger than anything else. / Its sound-wave likens Bima's laughs, / very impressive, can be heard from afar. / *Saron* interlock unassumingly. / The drum booms unwaveringly in *irama lamba* (medium tempi).

97. The appreciative one [Amongraga] asks softly / to Nuripin: "This is a village / white place of religious purity (*pemutihan*).[11] / But gamelan is sounded here. / What is the reason?" / "This all can happen" / Nuripin replies, "because / of *kyai* Bayu Panurta /

98. Who is a very understanding man. / Worldly comfort is not forbidden. / And livelihoods / of whatever people intends to do, can be carried out here. / The village has / a complete variety of employments; / we have all of them, / including *dhalang*, mask dancers, / *tledhek* dancers, clowns, gamelan musicians, all live here. //
(*Serat Tjentini* 1912–15, 1–2, 70–71).

What is particularly relevant to our inquiry is the intimate relationship between Islam and traditional Javanese performing arts. Even in a community of devout Muslims (*pemutihan*), gamelan, *wayang*, and Javanese dance were integral parts of the lives of the Islamic community. This is in contrast with the life of Islamic community in the 20th century, which I will discuss in the second part of this essay.

When describing lively performances in *pesantren*, the poems often feature a Java-Islam musical hybrid called *terbangan* or *salawatan*. Chiefly consisting of frame drums (*terbang*, associated with Islam), the ensemble accompanies a chorus[12] and may either be performed alone or to accompany dances and theatrical performances. Below are a few passages describing a performance of this hybrid ensemble.

105. ...Jayengraga and your *santri*, / after taking a break, let's start [to play again] quickly. / The son replies affirmatively.

106. He and his brother Jayengwesthi, / grasp *terbang* at the same time. / The sound of *bawa* (vocal introduction) is sweet, and *santri*'s voice / is

> boisterous, sweet and harmonious. / The melodic treatment is sturdy, / sounding a Javanese melody Lung Gadhung…. //
>
> 107. The three instruments sound thunderous. / They play together tightly. / They are *terbang*, *kendhang*, and *angklung*…. (ibid.272).

The poems later describe Jayengraga asking Cerma and Widiguna to perform a mask dance. The dance is lively. When the tempo of the music speeds up, the piece "Ginonjing" becomes more enlivening. The ones who dance lift up their pan (*cincing*) and pull up their sleeves (*capeng*) as if they prepare themselves for battle. The feature of the dance is *emprak*, a magic spectacle involving torture to both themselves and each other using fire, sword, dagger, and lance. It is easy to relegate this kind of magic spectacle to an animistic Javanese tradition. However, such spectacles involving self-inflicting injury, which relate to the knowledge of invulnerability, are also common in Sufi traditions.

Notice that the *terbangan* ensemble plays two pieces called "Lung Gadhung" and "Ginonjing." These two pieces are also the names of gamelan pieces. As can be seen in Martopangrawit's two-volume books of the notation of the *terbangan* pieces (Martopangrawit 1976), many *terbangan* pieces share titles with gamelan pieces. I have examined these pieces, analyzing their relationships with the gamelan pieces of the same names. I found that many of them are closely connected. The history of the development of these *terbangan* pieces—whether they were composed on gamelan first, then transformed them to *terbangan* ensemble, or vice versa—is very hard to trace, and this is not our concern here. The point I want to emphasize is that the relationship between gamelan music and Islam was very intimate.

Reform Perspectives and Syncretistic Views in the 20th Century

Let me begin this section with a quotation from *Suara Independen*, a now-defunct magazine known for its critical views toward government policy and officials, in 1995.

> After the musical overture ends, he [the dhalang] read the *Al Fatihah* [the opening of the Qur'an] in light-hearted and speedy manner. At the ending verse, Bung Moko [the *dhalang*] stopped for a few seconds. He seemed to forget [the line]. But for whatever reason, he continued [reading it] with unclear sound; what was heard was only a sentence "*dulat-dulit*," whereas the complete sound of the ending-*ayat* should say:

> *Shiraathalladziina an'amta 'alaihim, ghairil maghdluubi 'alaihim wa ladld-laaalliin* (the way of the people to whom You have blessed with happiness; not the way of those with evil in them and not of those who strays). After the end of that ambiguous sentence, the *sindhen* singers and gamelan musicians replied in chorus simultaneously: *Amen*.... (*Suara Independen* 1995).

The reported incident happened in the 1995 *wayang* festival called *Festival Greget Dhalang* (Festival of *Dhalang*'s Gusto), which was held in the outer hall of the Surakarta palace. Bung Moko (i.e., Harmoko) was the minister of the now-defunct Ministry of Information. He was honored to open the festival by performing a short episode before the main performance. It is uncommon for a *dhalang* to begin his performance by reading aloud any part of the Qur'an, but the minister-cum-*dhalang* Harmoko did just that, reading aloud the *Al Fatihah*. Forgetting the ending-part of the reading, however, he replaced it with the words *dulat-dulit*. Perhaps because the audience was mostly nominal Muslims (*abangan*), no one created a stir about the mistake. However, three weeks later the head of a local branch of the Islamic political party, Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), said to journalists that what Harmoko did deviated far from the spiritual intent of the Qur'an. Suddenly, the incident became a serious issue and garnered intensive media coverage. Harmoko's credential as a Muslim who had taken the pilgrimage to Mecca was questioned. When it was reported that the head of the Center of PPP in Jakarta forgave Harmoko, this action caused a demonstration by orthodox Muslims in front of the PPP office. Journalists asked the minister of Justice whether Harmoko should be brought to court, reminding him that similar cases had been brought to trial. The pressure was mounting on Harmoko. Through his local representative, he apologized to members of the community, especially to the Islamic community. The festival committee apologized as well. When this did not resolve the issue, Harmoko made a formal appearance before President Suharto, explaining his actions and apologizing.

Two questions arise from the incident. First, why was the reading of a Quranic verse included in the *wayang* by a *dhalang* who happened to be a high-ranking government official? Secondly, what made the members of an Islamic political party strongly condemn the *dhalang*-cum-Minister of the Information-cum *Kyai Haji* for his unfinished reading of *al-Fatihah*? To answer these questions, I will first contextualize the incident within the broader issue of Islam in Indonesia in the 20th century.

Basically, this event reveals the continuing conflict between the *kaum muda* (young faction), representing the modern/reform perspective, and *kaum tua* (old faction), embracing a long-tradition of syncretistic Java-Islam practices. Several

Islamic organizations emerged in the 20th century, representing the two perspectives. The most prominent and largest organization representing the young faction is Muhammadiyah; that of the old faction is Nahdatul Ulama (NU). Although these two organizations are ideologically opposed, each has its own dynamic and conflicting views toward gamelan and *wayang*. I would like to begin with the views of Muhammadiyah.

In the late 19th century, because of the advance of the steamship, more and more Indonesians made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Many remained to study in Cairo. By the early 20th century, these Indonesians became influential teacher/reformists following the teachings of Muhammad Abduh of Al Azhar University in Cairo, a pioneer of Islamic modernism. Ahmad Dahlan of Yogyakarta in Central Java became one of these reformists. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca and stayed for several years to study. Returning to Yogyakarta, he founded Muhammadiyah in 1912. Like other reformists in the Southeast Asian Muslim world then, Ahmad Dahlan and his peers sought to purify Islam to return to the fundamental truths of the Qur'an and Hadith (Peacock 1978, 24).

> They rejected other authorities, including the venerated *kijai* [Islamic teacher of an Islamic boarding school] and the other Muslim teachers and scholars who taught the ornate philosophies and legal systems of medieval Islam . . . . The holy scripture did not favor the syncretic practices. Animism, Hinduism, and Sufism therefore must be ruthlessly excised from the life of the true believer. The spread of reformism accentuates the distinction between the syncretists, those who practice the pre-Islamic religion, and the reformists, who ideally did not" (ibid.).

In its early years, Muhammadiyah apparently delivered its reform message intensely. As a motto to promote the reform, the organization used a passage from the Qur'an: "*amar ma'ruf-nahi munkar*" (a group of people enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong). Among elements considered wrong paths are *takhayul* (imaginations), *bid'ah* (innovations), and *khurafat* (superstitions). By replacing the first letter (from *kh* to *c*) of the third element, the three elements together become TBC, an acronym for tuberculosis. The cleansing activity by Muhammadiyah is meant to purify Islamic faith from syncretism, an Islam that has been infected by TBC.

In the 1990s and 2000s, Muhammadiyah apparently cannot ignore the prevalence of local arts in the life of Indonesian people. In its national meetings during this period, the organization has focused on the relationship between itself and local arts. Although opposition continues, the organization began taking a conciliatory approach toward local arts. In the 1995 conference in Aceh,

Muhammadiyah declared the usefulness of art as a gift from God (*anugerah*). Art is allowable (*mubah*), but should be practiced only if it does not direct people to destruction (*fasad*), danger (*dharar*), evil (*'ishyan*), or away from Allah (*ba'id 'annilah*) (Khisbiyah 2002, 3–4). The 2000 conference affirmed the organization's appreciation of the arts.

One of the prominent Muhammadiyah intellectuals, al-Hafid (2002, 153), spoke pro and con about the place of arts in society according to the Qur'an and the Sunna (a collection of Hadith—words and deeds of the Prophet). Conflicting positions are apparent in these texts. For example, music should be avoided because it contains vanity that can lead one astray (*lahwa al-hadis*), but, music can also have a positive aspect (*wagdud min shautika*), such as to soften one's character (*wagdud min shautika*), as stated in *Surah Luqman* verse 19. To enjoy a beautiful and sweet song, and by extension its creator and its critic, is part of a good and beautiful entity bestowed by God to His people (*wagdud min shautika,* in *Surah al-Araf 32*). Retrospectively, al-Hafid feels that in its early movement, Muhammadiyah marginalized arts generally and locally. This was because the organization exerted its authority more to straighten *aqidah tauhid* (monotheistic faith). The cleansing activity focused on purifying Islam from syncretism, as Islam was wrapped up by TBC, especially in visual arts that were made as sacred objects and in music that contains vanity that can lead one astray. For the latter, Muslims have been directed to enjoy the beauty of al-Qur'an from the aspects of its recited melody and from its artistic rendition. But, as times change, thoughts about religious purification also change. Consequently, the organization revisited its perspectives toward arts. The guides to viewing the arts in positive light were formulated in the 1995 conference in Aceh, the 2000 conference in Jakarta, the 2001 conference in Solo, and the 2002 conference in Bali.

It is interesting that the organization that started as a movement to purify Islam from Java-Sufi mysticism, with its consideration of art as forbidden (*syirik*), transformed itself toward highly liberal Islam. Institutionally, Muhammadiyah is now committed to this cause. The 2002 conference in Surakarta was an attempt to accelerate the socialization of the organization's positive stance toward the arts (especially local arts), although dissenting voices were also taken into account. The conference also invited artists and asked them to voice their opinions on the relationship between the arts and Islam. Further, a play titled "Opera Diponegoro" by contemporary choreographer Sardono W. Kusuma was presented as part of the conference. All presentations, including discussions with participants, were published a year later in the document *Sinergi Agama Dan Budaya Lokal: Dialektika Muhammadiyah Dan Seni Lokal* (The Synergy of Religion and Local Cultures: Muhammadiyah's Dialogue with Local Arts).

It was in a question-answer session during this conference that we learned of the plurality of opinions of Muhammadiyah members toward local arts. In one of these sessions, a participant voiced his frustration about the positive tone of the conference to embrace local cultures. He said, "We should eradicate local cultures as they are full of *syirik* (sin), get rid of them wisely, not haphazardly. If we cannot eliminate them, what are their values? If the arts cannot be used for *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*,[13] we should say goodbye to them" (Thoyibi et al 2003, 233).

It remains to be seen in the long run how Muhammadiyah members will act on the organization's positive stance toward local arts. From the 2002 conference, we learn that members of the old generation still strongly hold to the fight to consider local arts as *syirik*. Part of the summary of the conference is worth mentioning here.

> Sessions in the Tarjih conference II show how diverse were the opinions of Muhammadiyah members, even among its elite members, educational as well as bureaucratic elites. Examining the thoughts of a prime speaker, Amin Abdulah, the former head of Majelis Tarjih PP Muhammadiyah (1995–2000), Muhammadiyah appears very inclusive, accommodative, and responsive toward tangible issues. However, if we observe the thoughts from several participants and the dynamic of the dialogue, Muhammadiyah appears so exclusive, resistant, and slow.
>
> The dialogues developing throughout the conference show that the suspicion and resistance of many members of Muhammadiyah toward local arts were significantly high (M. Thoyibi 2003, 250).

The summary continues to say that not all participants show the same suspicion and resistance. For example, some participants suggested that actually it is unnecessary to take issue on local arts with Islamic doctrine since the local arts and their patronage have experienced a change. Some proposed that there are other highly controversial issues that Muhammadiyah should address, such as the television and film industries.

Nevertheless, leaders of the young generation of Muhammadiyah are committed to fulfilling the aim to be attentive to local arts. One of its prominent promoters is Yayah Kisbhiyah. Since 1999, she has been the director of the Center of Cultural Studies and Social Change at the Muhammadiyah University in Surakarta. There are three main themes that Muhammadiyah has been carrying out: 1) pluralism and multiculturalism, 2) progressive Islam and social transformation, and 3) freedom and conflict resolution (Kisbhiyah 2003, 305). In collaboration with the director of the Center of Muhammadiyah and the Ford Foundation, she and her colleagues planned and launched activities to reconcile the relationship between Muhammadiyah and local cultures. Under her leader-

ship, the University of Muhammadiyah has collaborated with the Indonesian Institute of the Arts to offer an extracurricular activity to students of Muhammadiyah schools in Central Java and West Sumatra for direct, hands-on experience in learning local arts. The university also sponsors the staging of local performing arts in Islamic communities.

> My argument is this: art is a representation of cultural plurality, because art contains definitive cultural contents and contexts possessed and practiced by patronage and practitioners of that art. Through PAS [Pendidikan Apresiasi Seni, Education for Art Appreciation] and the staging of art, we hope to create non-literal and non-theological dialogue between the practitioners of the art and members of their audience who have different belief systems, lifestyles, and cultural backgrounds. I hope that the arts—with its adage "art knows no boundaries"—are capable in bridging artificial boundaries and compartmentalization that were formed by differences in ethnicity, religion, gender, and social status (ibid., 507).

Clearly, Kisbhiyah promotes a highly liberal outlook. On the surface, such an outlook greatly disagrees with orthodox-minded members of Muhammadiyah, usually represented by members from the older generation. It should be mentioned, however, that in practice the reform movement has not been as clear-cut as simply purifying an older, polluted Islam. As Nakamura in his study of Muhammadiyah in Kotagede, Yogyakarta, argues, "Reformist Islam is not antithetical to Javanese culture but an integral part of it, and what reformists have been endeavoring is, so to speak, to distill a pure essence of Islam from Javanese cultural traditions" (Nakamura 1983, 141). To illustrate, I would like to cite Nakamura's informant in discussing *hawa nafsu* (bad desire). The informant mentions watching *kethoprak* (a folk drama) to search for expressions of unrestrained *hawa nafsu*. He said that after watching the show "you must have been exhausted (*payah*) and lazy (*malas*) but not so much satisfied yet (*kurang puas*). Your body felt hot *(panas*) and trembling (*gemetar*), and you felt thirsty (*haus*) for anything (implying, as I [Nakamura] understood it, 'thirst' for food, drink and sex). That's the way *kethoprak* is" (ibid., 171). The point is that watching *kethoprak* will lead one astray from the path prescribed by God. But, this same informant makes an exception for people watching *wayang kulit*. Since *wayang kulit* represents a Javanese ethical and aesthetic form that is *alus* (also *halus,* refined, elegant, polite, civilized), the informant implies that it is acceptable for members of Muhammadiyah in Kotagede to watch the shadow play, as it might lead to a harmonious end (ibid., 169).

These accounts demonstrate that there have been highly dynamic, pro and con receptions of local/traditional arts within Muhammadiyah. From its recent conferences, the organization moves toward liberal Islam. In this sense, the organization concurs with Muslim traditionalists in accepting and accommodating preexisting beliefs and customs. This is in parallel with the ideology of Nahdatul Ulama (NU), the rival of Muhammadiyah. NU emerged in 1926 from the *pesantren* environment. A *pesantren* is an Islamic boarding school whose students are devoted to learning Islamic arts and science. Commonly, these schools are located in villages or outskirts of a town. *Pesantren* are run by *kyai*, authoritative figures that *santri* must obey. The *pesantren* community has a positive stance toward art.

I mentioned earlier the conspicuous, hearty presence of performing arts in Islamic communities in the 18th and 19th century; this was the atmosphere that had brought about the creation of *salawatan* or *terbangan* (an ensemble mixing Islamic and gamelan instruments) and other hybrid cultural expressions. In the 20th century, the strong presence of gamelan and *wayang* in the *pesantren* seems to have diminished. A few studies of *pesantren* and NU revolve around religious and political aspects of the institutions; they do not mention performing arts activity (for example, see Dhofier 1999). A few authors discuss the presence of gamelan and *wayang* briefly in their essays. Bisri Effendy (2003, 277), an Islamic intellectual, son of a *kyai* who grew up in the 1950s and '60s, *pesantren* graduate, and government culture scholar, remembered that *kyai* Hayat al-Makki invited all kinds of local artists to perform in his Bendo *pesantren* in East Java once every four years. This tradition was followed by another *kyai* (a Bendo *pesantren* graduate) in Magelang, Central Java, as well as by *kyai* Chotib of Curahkates *pesantren* in Jember, who invited Gandrung Banyuwangi (a social dance group) to perform in his *pesantren* once every year. Looking at a larger issue, Adnan (1990, 443) observed that,

> Abdurrahman Wahid (a leader of NU and a former Indonesian president) in his interview with Rijklefs 'explained that *kyais* do not see the tradition of the Javanese such as *wayang* (shadow puppet show) as forbidden. Modernist Muslims do (though not always) brand this as forbidden because it is seen as an element of Hindu tradition which is in essence unacceptable.' Abdurrahman also said that 'his grandfather, *Kyai* Hasyhim Asy'ari (the founder of NU) did allow his sons to attend *wayang* shows.'[14]

Nonetheless, the presence of local arts in contemporary *pesantren* is not as significant as that within 18th- and 19th-century Islamic community. As stated earlier, the encounter between Javanese and *pesantren* traditions has been responsible

for both the creation of the Java-Islam hybrid *terbangan* ensemble and the incorporation of the Islamic mystical path into *wayang* stories. I suggest that the continuing Islamic reformation, which has become a more complicated reality, has caused this declining interest of *pesantren* in local arts. The proliferation of Islamic organizations and their involvement with religious, social, economic, educational, and political issues also contributed to this decline. These diverse concerns have forced the organizations to spend their resources and time beyond religious and performing arts activities in *pesantren*, hence marginalizing the involvement of local arts in the Islamic community.

In the 1940s, Islamic organizations representing both traditionalists and modernists tried to unite by forming an Islamic federation called Masjumi. The attempt to mute the differences did not last long, however. Some organizations, including NU, split off from Masjumi, forming their own political party. After Indonesians declared their independence, NU became a close ally of the National Party and President Sukarno's regime. Its support of the government allowed NU to gain control over the Ministry of Religion and administer the vast, lucrative Hajj operations facilitating thousands or even millions of pilgrimages to Mecca (Jones 1984, 9).

NU continued to occupy the Ministry during Suharto's regime and maintained this intimate relationship with the state until the 1970s. However, the political manipulation of the state on Islamic organizations caused feuds among the NU factions and their leaders. Gradually, the roles of NU in religious affairs within the government were reduced. Eventually, the state controlled Islamic education, *zakat fitrah* (giving of alms), and the Hajj operations (ibid., 19). On the latter, there was "an increasing frequency of *haji dinas*, or pilgrims who made the Hajj at state expense, to reinforce Muslim credentials of the key government officials, reward individuals for loyalty to the government, or even perhaps to dilute the import of the title, 'Haji' by enabling such peculiar pilgrims as Javanese *dalang* to acquire it" (ibid., 9). In this sense, it has been the aim of the state to propagate Islam as the official religion. In fact, during and following Suharto's reign, there was an increasing affirmation of Islamic identity and piety across the nation due to several factors (Ricklefs 2001, 379).

It was in the climate of this bittersweet relation between the state and Islamic organizations that the previously mentioned incident of *dhalang* Kyai Haji Harmoko took place. I have not yet found other example of *dhalang* quoting Quranic passages in performance, and cannot prove that the government was responsible for the expenses of Harmoko's pilgrimage to Mecca. The point is that in taking the Hajj and inserting *Al Fatihah* in his *wayang* performance, the Minister of Information-cum-*dhalang* attempted to

reinforce his Muslim credential to maintain the influence of the state in Islamic affairs. Unfortunately, he forgot the last sentence of his aural reading of *Al Fatihah*; hence, the scandal.

The Song to Praise the Prophet Muhammad

There is another example of the tangible incorporation of Islam into *wayang* during Suharto's regime. A performance was carried out by one of the best puppeteers, a sympathizer of the government's political party, Golongan Karya (Golkar). His loyalty to Golkar was demonstrated explicitly in his performances. For example, he composed his own version of *janturan* (narration) for the first scene of performance, which was full of descriptions of Golkar and its ideology. Significantly, he took a pilgrimage to Mecca, thus earning the title *Kyai Haji*.

In some performances I witnessed in the mid 1990s, he always incorporated an Islamic song in the Gara-Gara, a scene symbolizing the world in turmoil. In this scene, the *punakawan* (clown-servants, wise companions of a prince) are said to muffle the turmoil by singing songs and clowning. The companions are Semar and his three sons, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong. In contemporary *wayang*, the humorous scene becomes the most important part of the Gara-Gara. Nowadays, the scene takes most of the time in the second division of the performance.[15]

In addition to verbal and physical clowning, an important part of a humorous scene in the Gara-Gara is a request from members of the audience for the musicians to play their favorite pieces. Commonly these pieces feature the singing of *pesindhen* (women singers). Here, the *dhalang* acts as a disc-jockey, reading letters delivered to him before the humorous scene begins. It is in this context that the abovementioned *dhalang* incorporated Islamic music. In a performance I saw in 1991, the audience requested "Shalawat Badar," a praise song to the Prophet Muhammad. Since originally this song is accompanied by frame-drum ensemble (*terbangan*), some musicians switched their instruments from gamelan instruments to frame drums, which they bring with them for such circumstances. A few gamelan instruments were also played to accompany this song (noticeably a large gong), but it was clear that *terbangan* ensemble and singing were featured. Here is the dialogue among the clown-servants prior to the presentation of "Shalawat Badar."

PETRUK (reading letter): To the venerable Haj *dhalang* Petruk in Malang. Dear Sir, let me say in this letter that we're big fans of the performing art of *wayang*, especially if the puppeteer is the venerable

dhalang Petruk.[16] From the large members of Purwadadi Botanic Garden in Pasuruan, we're requesting our favorite pieces. (1) Shalawat Badar; (2) Walangkekek in the style of Sundanese, Central Javanese, and East Javanese. For the approval of Ki *dhalang* for this request, we are very grateful.

GARENG: Let's play Shalawat Badar.

PETRUK: Yes, let's present Shalawat Badar.

BAGONG: Let's give it to Yatmi (the singer).

PETRUK: Yes, Yatmi.

BAGONG: Yatmi, who has used the mosque as a blanket? [audience laughing]

PETRUK: Bagong, why don't you think before you speak up? How can the mosque be used as a blanket?

BAGONG: If you don't understand you should ask. I do not speak aimlessly, but with reason.

PETRUK: What is the reason?

BAGONG: What is the root word of Masjid (mosque)? Originally, it is from the word "sajadah." "Sajadah" becomes "Sujidah." Adding a prefix "ma," it becomes "masjidu. Commonly people say "masjid." Sajadah, sujidah, masjidu, then becomes masjid.[17] Therefore using masjid as a blanket is the same as using sajadah as a blanket—masjid is used only for sajadah (prayer). Don't use it for discussing politics. Remind Gareng, the mosque must not be used to talk about the lottery number.

GARENG: [Gareng hits Bagong very hard] I kick your neck, you'll be dead.

PETRUK: You're confused between praying and predicting (the lottery number).

GARENG: No way José.

PETRUK: Please, Mbak Yatmi. Shalawat Badar in *pelog* (tuning) with a mixed *pathet* (mode)

GARENG: Don't forget. I will present my esteem father, Bapak Haji (Hajj) Sutarno.

BAGONG: Please enjoy Pak Haji.

PETRUK: Let's begin.

Shalatullah Shalamullah / 'ala Thaha rasulillah / Shalatullah salamullah / 'ala Yasin habibillah. (Praise and greeting to Thaha (the Prophet). Praise and greeting to Yasin.[18]

The song "Shalawat Badar" began with a vocal introduction by the *pesindhen* singer, Yatmi. The melody of the solo part is the same as the melody of the piece, but it was sung in the style of *bawa* (a non-metrical vocal introduction sung by a male singer). After the first line of the solo ended, the *punakawan* were clowning around, making funny comments about playing an Islamic song on gamelan. The solo singing ended, then the piece began with an instrumental prelude consisting of *saron* instruments playing the melody of the song (in Javanese cipher notation: 3671 1766 3671 1766 2222 6321 3671 1766), accompanied by a steady rhythm of one *kendhang*'s stroke (playing off-beats), repetitive pattern of a jingle, and gong punctuation at the end of each line. Then, the main presentation began: a mixed chorus in turn with a soloist singing, accompanied frame drums (*terbang*), while *kendhang*, jingle, and gong continued their previous parts. In one verse, while the chorus was singing, Gareng repetitively recited the beginning of the *shahadatin* confession of the faith (*La ilaha ilallah*, there is no God but Allah), and recited the second half of the confession once (*Muhammaddun rasullulah*, the Prophet Muhammad is His Messenger) at the end of the song. Then, in his turn, Bagong did the same.

In this contemporary *wayang*, an Islamic song was sung in the context of a humorous scene. Besides verbal clowning, the scene included the presentation of light pieces, including songs from other Javanese regions and Indonesian and Western popular music. The inclusion of "Shalawat Badar" is another tangible transformation of an Islamic element in a *wayang* performance.

Conclusion

Tracing the impact of Islam on Javanese gamelan and *wayang kulit*, the present study covers a rather long historical period, from the early period of the Islamized Java (around the 16th century) through Indonesia's 20th century New Order. Due to sparse evidence, the earlier the period in which issues are examined, the more inconclusive the findings. The proliferation of gamelan in the north-coastal areas during the early Islamized Java; the effect of Islam on the stylization of *wayang* puppets; the creation and function of gamelan *sekaten*; and, the fusion of Islam in *wayang* stories: these are put forward on the basis of mostly circumstantial evidence and oral accounts. Entering the 18th and 19th centuries, some Javanese literature provides us with a bit more light.

One important point emerging from the discussion is the intimate relationship between Islam and Javanese culture. The relationship nurtured the production of performing arts that had deeper religious and social meaning. Becker (1993) traces this deep religious meaning to the pre-Islamic period, seeing Hindu Tantricism as

parallel to Sufism. I would suggest that, as the Javanese were exposed to Islamic orthodoxy in the 18th century onwards, the continuing Java-Islam encounters brought about the complexity of the meaning and context of performing arts, as well as the increasing debates about them. We learn from the 18th- and 19th-century literary works such as *Cabolek*, *Centhini*, and *Gatholoco* about both deeper religious meanings of Javanese performing arts as well as poly-modality of the context and multiplicity of the meanings of gamelan and *wayang*.

In the 20th century, as Islamic-cum-sociopolitical organizations entered onto the cultural scene, the meaning and context of performing arts were expanded and thickened, just like the debates about them. Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama (the two largest Islamic organizations) promoted two opposing views: the young reformist faction saw traditional arts as an obstacle to Islam; the old faction was in defense of Java-Islam syncretism that embraced traditional arts. However, dynamic discussions and internal debates on the place of traditional performing arts in the Islamic community happened within each of the organizations. At the beginning of the 21st century, the younger generation of Muhammadiyah seemed to soften and to turn toward more liberal views on the local performing arts.

When the contemporary Indonesian state entered the debate, issues around the performing arts became even more complicated. The relationship between the New Order regime and the Islamic organizations contributed to the changing context and meaning of performing arts. On the one hand, the state carried out political maneuvering to control and to gain allies within Islamic organizations. On the other hand, the campaign by the state to officialize Islam has helped lead to increasing affirmation of Islamic identity and piety across the nation. Consequently, this activity brought about a bittersweet relationship between the state and these organizations. The case involving the Minister of Information-cum-*dhalang* reciting *Al Fatihah* in the opening of his *wayang* performance should be seen in this political context. The same applies to the excitement of the *dhalang*-cum-Golkar sympathizer to include "Shalawat Badar" (an Islamic song to phrase the Prophet Muhammad) in his performance.

Javanese arts remain resilient and still resonate within the hearts of the people of Java. They are susceptible and responsive to change precipitated by human actions. Islam has served important roles in the development of Javanese arts. The changing of Islamic perspectives in the contexts of sociopolitical changes has caused performing arts to respond and to impart meaning in many different ways. This can range from an intangible transformation of Islam into teaching a mystical path, such as in the *wayang* story of Dewa Ruci, to a tangible transformation of Islam in mundane form, such as the incorporation of "Shalawat Badar" in a humorous scene of a *wayang* performance.

Notes

1. *Mustahabb* (commendable), *wajib* (recommended), *mubah* (indifferent), and *makruh* (disfavored) are categories to be applied to music in-between the *haram-halal* polarization (al Faruqi 1985, 7).

2. According to tradition, there are nine *wali*s who are said to be responsible for the introduction and expansion of Islam in Java.

3. As far as I know, there is no trace or current report about these Gresik gamelans. They seem to have disappeared. For the free translation and explication of Groot's entire report on the manners and costumes of the Javanese in Gresik, see Kumar 1996.

4. To strengthen the point, I should mention an active gamelan manufacturing in Semarang (another north-coastal town) as reported by Edw. Jacobson and J. H. van Hasselt in 1907 (translated by Andrew Toth, 1975). The authors said that Semarang had been known for its gongs since early times. The Semarang gongs were sold not only within Java but also to Bali and Lombok. Smaller-sized gongs were exported to other Indonesian islands, Singapore, the Malay peninsula, and Brunei (ibid., 150–151).

5. This summary is drawn from Soebardi's translation of *Serat Cabolek* (Soebardi 1975, 116–119). The original texts were written in a poetic genre, meant to be sung, called *macapat*. Each of the *macapat* poems is governed by a number of rules: a fixed number of lines per stanza, a fixed number of syllables per line, and a fixed ending-vowel sound at the end of each line.

6. Stating this union publicly in an Islamic society following *syariah* (Islamic law) can be dangerous. The story of Syeh Sitijenar, who was executed because he declared unity with God as an ultimate divine will, is similar to al'Hallaj's execution (ibid.,106) as he declared, "*Anna al'Haqq*" ("I am God").

7. The term "*wayang thengul*" is commonly used by East Javanese. Central Javanese refer to the same *wayang* as *wayang golek*. The form and performance technique of Javanese *wayang golek* are the same as Sundanese *wayang golek*, but the latter presents stories from the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.

8. It is said that the court of Surakarta used to perform *wayang kulit* versions of Menak stories (ed. similar to those found in Lombok) featuring a *wayang kulit* screen and two-dimensional *wayang* puppets made of leather with figures specifically designed for the Menak story. Unfortunately, there is no written report about this court *wayang kulit Menak*.

9. The *Centhini* was written by the court poets (*pujangga*) Ranggasutrasna, Yasadipura II, and Sastranagara. Its basic story concerns adventurous wanderers. The three main wanderers are the descendents of the king of Giri, East Java. They ran for their lives when the kingdom was attacked and occupied by the king of Mataram. In their journey, they passed from one place to another, describing all sorts of things that they encountered. The wanderers also passed through and resided in a number of Islamic communities and *pesantren* (traditional Islamic schools), seeking and deepening their *elmu* (sacred or mystical knowledge).

10. For a complete and delightful translation, see Anderson (ibid.). Like *Cabolek*, *Gatholoco* is written in *macapat* sung-poetry. Each song should follow prosodic rules: a fixed number of lines per stanza, a fixed number of syllables per line, and a fixed number of vowels at the end of each line. What is special with Anderson's translation is that he follows these rules, except for the last one.

11. Here *pemutihan* (white place) refers to a place populated largely by orthodox Muslims, who follow strictly the practices of Islam.

12. Other instruments in the ensemble are *angklung* (indigenous Javanese bamboo instrument) and *kendhang* (indigenous Javanese drum).

13. As I mentioned above, this is a passage from the Qur'an, which means "a group of people enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong." This Quranic passage is used by Muhammadiyah as a motto for its cause to "purify" Islam in Java.

14. Adnan mentioned these examples to take issue with the well-known *santri-abangan* distinction of the Javanese society proposed by Geertz (1960). "*Santri*" refers to a devout Muslim who is committed to practice Islamic teachings such as to pray five times a day, fast during Ramadan, disdain pork, and so forth. *Abangan* refers to a nominal Muslim who practices only a few Islamic rituals in conjunction with indigenous Javanese and Hindu-Buddhist beliefs. Adnan and other scholars, including Hodgson and Nakamura, objected to Geertz's classification, finding this distinction too rigid and a very narrow view of Javanese Islam. In reality *kyai* and devout Muslims generally do tolerate non-Islamic/Javanese traditions, and nominal Muslims have intimate relationships with *kyai* to fulfill their spiritual needs.

15. A *wayang* story is divided into three main divisions, each named after the mode (*pathet*) of the music: Pathet Nem, Pathet Sanga, and Pathet Manyura. Each division or a section in a division can be shortened or expanded at the whim of the *dhalang*. It is worth noting that in contemporary performance, scenes with humor are expanded to a large degree, so much so that humor itself takes most of the time and becomes the feature of the performance.

16. In the context of this humorous scene, it is common for the *dhalang* to identify himself as Petruk.

17. This etymological comment on the word "masjid" is accurate. The *dhalang* in question learned this from a Muhammadiyah *ulama* in Yogyakarta (pc. June, 2008). I would like to thank both Annette Lienau, a Ph.D. student in comparative literature at Yale University, for indicating the accuracy of this etymology, and Yasir Ahmed, an Arabic teacher at Wesleyan, for his confirmation and explanation.

18. Thaha and Yasin are honorary address for the Prophet Muhammad.

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2

Tensions between *Adat* (Custom) and *Agama* (Religion) in the Music of Lombok

David D. Harnish

In this chapter, David Harnish explores the rise and power of local Islamic organizations in Lombok, the island directly to the west of Bali, along with the impact of the regional government and the development of Sufi-related music forms. More than nationalism or other national identity markers, Islam is the common denominator for 95% of Lombok's residents. The motto "yang penting Islam" (what's important is Islam) binds together Muslim communities, led by the vast majority ethnic population, the Sasak. The practice of Islam, however, has never been unified. Friction and hostility have marked two Sasak religious divisions, called Waktu Telu (3 times) who are "traditionalist" Muslims, and Waktu Lima (5 times) who are "orthodox" Muslims, and music has been a prime site of contestation. While the Waktu Telu have nurtured the performing arts for ritual contexts in maintaining adat *(customary law and tradition), some Waktu Lima leaders have scrutinized forms of musical performance as deviations or distractions from Islam and have sought to establish* agama hilang adat *(religion without* adat*). Thus, the dialectics of* adat *and* agama *in Lombok resonate with regional and global interpretations and expressions of the religion. To understand contemporary developments, Harnish investigates the roles of the former colonizers, the Hindu Balinese and the Dutch, in establishing attitudes toward creative religious practices, and then, based on years of ethnographic research in the area, explains the arts policies of the provincial government and the evolving local attitudes about the traditional arts such as the* wayang Sasak *(Sasak shadow play). Arts policies, which included establishing a series of music contests, have worked to detraditionalize regional music styles, and to secularize global, pan-Islamic forms in creating musics that appeal both to the government aesthetic and to tourists.*

On an afternoon in late 2001, I sat with my friend and host, H. Lalu Wiramaja, during Ramadan in the city of Mataram on the island of Lombok

in the province of Nusa Tenggara Barat, and we discussed the problems of music and religion in Lombok and particularly the shrinking Sasak ethnic group of nominal or traditionalist Muslims called Waktu Telu. "When one," he said, referring to the Waktu Telu, who he considered non-Muslims, "becomes a Muslim, they must give up everything they were before." As they become Muslim they then develop "a problem with the remnants of the culture of the Waktu Telu" in Lombok, and may want to work to eliminate that pre-Islamic culture. He implied here that Waktu Telu ("Three Times," also called Wektu Telu or Wetu Telu—"Three Stages"), who follow traditional customary law (*adat*), adopt Islamic law (*Shari'a*) as they transition to becoming modern, orthodox Muslims; they give up *adat* to embrace the world religion of Islam.[1] Many Islamic leaders, in fact, have stated that they seek "*agama hilang adat*" (religion without *adat*), *agama* essentially freed from the impure constraints of local custom, culture, and identity. With *adat* discredited, *agama* becomes the link connecting the local with the transnational and the authentic. *Agama* must always be authentic, otherwise it becomes merely a loose set of beliefs (*kepercayaan*). To most orthodox Muslims in Lombok, the Waktu Telu faith is either *kepercayaan* or simply false.

The tensions between *adat* and *agama*, and between music and religion for that matter, have led to contestation, frequent debates, occasional violence, and much intellectualizing in Lombok. As an outsider looking in, it is easy to misread the situation, as it appears that advocates for Islam (or the power of the religion itself) have sought to bring an end to traditional customs, rituals, and music. But, this is an oversimplification that is not always true. The parties involved in the debates surrounding religion and culture—local clergy, government offices (ministries of religion, education, and tourism), and reformist organizations—have differing interests and goals, and their impacts upon expressive culture, communities, and musicians have been mixed. Islam should not be characterized as a deterrent to or terminator of earlier cultural life, for it has also been a powerful stimulant for new music interpretations, forms, and adaptations, which have enriched local culture. Islamic music today defines a growing part of contemporary music culture as more and more residents identify with its sounds and messages.

This chapter explores the complex problems of *adat* and *agama*, and reformism and traditionalism, and discusses the evolution of the early, local strata of Islamic performing arts, the rise of more globally recognized Islamic forms, and the interactive relationships between the government, musicians, and religious leaders and organizations. Following an opening discussion outlining various histories and problems in general, a second section highlights the specific music, dance, and theater styles involved.

"Yang Penting Islam"

Yang Penting Islam (what's important is Islam) is a motto among Lombok's citizens that bonds together Muslims of various ethnic groups. The overwhelming majority of people in Lombok are ethnically Sasak; minorities include Bugis, Makassarese, Javanese, Sumbawanese (Samawa and Mbojo peoples), Arabs, and Hindu Balinese (excluded from the Muslin bond). Despite the Islamic union, these ethnic communities have little in common; they share few musical music styles or preferences, and generally worship in their own mosques. Thus, these groups are not as integrated as the motto might suggest, but they do mutually embrace Islamic law and share an appreciation for each other through Islam. They are part of the same *umma*, the community of the faithful, an idea that implies brotherhood and some mutual responsibility and obligation. The local Arab population has a unique position in this *umma* as "keturunan Nabi" (descendents of Muhammad, or *Sayyid*).[2] Though not always trusted (see Clegg 2004, 189), Arabs are greatly respected, sometimes feared, and often favored in business transactions.

Among the minority groups, the Balinese have had the largest impact upon Lombok. They are former colonizers who introduced colorful performing arts and stratified languages while conscripting Sasak to military campaigns in Bali and taking Sasak wives as desired. The Balinese also built temples and palaces wherever their communities developed, and today hundreds of active temples—which to some Sasak are painful symbols of the Balinese colonial period—remain in West and Central Lombok. Over the centuries, Balinese *adat*, social system, and performing arts strongly influenced many Sasak villages and musics, particularly among the Waktu Telu. And, while the Waktu Telu generally maintained favorable ties to the Balinese, the growing Islamic movement was largely predicated upon ending Balinese rule. These developments inspired the division among the Sasak between Waktu Telu and Waktu Lima (lit. Five Times). The latter group is usually defined as either orthodox Muslims or those on the road to orthodoxy. Much of the struggle to remove the local from the transnational in religion and cultural life originates with the historic and continuing Balinese impact within Lombok, which many believe has helped maintain traditional Sasak music and *adat*. Thus, the arguments between *agama* and *adat*, though not restricted to Lombok, are fiercer here, where *yang penting Islam* is a motto, than elsewhere in Indonesia.[3]

It is important here to further define *adat* and *agama*. My observation is that, unlike some areas of Indonesia, in Lombok these notions or practices of custom and religion are mutually exclusive. Hefner (1999, 212–213) offers an excellent definition of these terms: *agama* is divinely revealed religion while

adat is humanly generated custom or tradition. This perspective is embraced by modernists and reformists: the former (*agama*) is essentially provided by God, the latter (*adat*) by mere humans. Waktu Telu leaders do not frame the definitions in this way, as they believe that *adat* was also divinely prescribed (indeed, the word also applied to religious practices before the word *agama* was in common circulation). Lacking numbers, access to media, and political representation, however, they do not have a voice in defining these terms. Part of the *adat/agama* polemic stems from urban and rural life. *Adat* is still followed in some rural areas by both Waktu Telu and moderate Sasak, where it always formed part of the agrarian system; urban centers, disconnected from the land, are more ardent, ideologically homogenous, and modernist. Further fueling the problem is the fact that most Waktu Telu follow Islamic law nominally if at all; *adat* practices in some of these communities largely fill the role of *agama* and guide belief and ritual systems as well as kinship and etiquette behavior, thus upsetting leaders who insist that all Sasak be Muslims as understood in the wider world. While there is relative harmony between *adat* and *agama* on some islands, it is the specific history of Lombok that so divides traditionalists and modern reformists.[4]

For much of Lombok's history, Islam was marginalized and outside the governing powers. The island endured Buddhist and Hindu periods (largely shaped by Javanese influence), and a period when Islam spread and sultanates arose. Then, 150 years of Balinese domination followed by 50 years of Dutch colonization ensued, which only ended after World War II. Islam became the rallying point of resistance over the latter 200 years, and it inspired rebellions against both Balinese and Dutch. The 1950s, following Indonesian independence, saw a quick expansion of Islam into local politics and education. This was prefaced by the development of the first modern reformist organization in Lombok, Nahdhutul Watan (NW), by Muslim leader Zainuddin Abdul Majid (1906–97) in 1936. Abdul Majid,[5] who is said to have studied in Mecca for 12 years, took a government position in the 1950s and led the charge of *Tuan Gurus* ("master" religious teachers/leaders) into the government. Meanwhile, the NW organization impacted many of Lombok's religious, educational, and political developments (see Harnish 2007). Since the 1970s, many NW leaders and other *Tuan Gurus* (some associated with national organizations such as Muhammadiyah[6]) have been members of the Indonesian parliament or have held important government posts. Today, being a *Tuan Guru* or at least a Haji (one who has completed the pilgrimage) is almost a requirement for some offices. Thus, reformist Islam went from being outside the nucleus of power, where it gathered strength as opposition for 200 years, to being the center of authority on Lombok.

It's important to note that, though Sasak Muslims have striven for global reformist Islam, the religion has been mediated by a process of localization—where local leaders have shaped the development of modern religious practice—and that many of these localized practices are distinct. A male commoner, for instance, who returns from Mecca as Haji achieves a social standing of lower nobility and may have offers of interest-free financial loans and daughters for marriage.[7] Further, the privileged, almost mystical stature of Arabs and "the Arab" in community life, and the uniquely powerful positions of *Tuan Gurus* are other examples of localization. *Tuan Gurus*, leaders thought to have initially arisen to preserve and spread the teachings of the original proselytizers to Lombok, are men who go to Mecca and generally study extensively at religious schools either there or in Egypt and who return to become teachers. Abdul Majid, mentioned above, was the first of the great, modern *Tuan Gurus*, whose function and authority may surpass the counterpart *ulama* in other parts of the country. Mosques may be built in their honor as their spheres of influence grow, and many open *pesantren* (religious schools/socio-cultural institutions) that further spread their teachings.

Due to the successive Balinese and Dutch colonizations and the resulting emasculation of the local nobility, *Tuan Gurus* quickly filled a power vacuum within Sasak communities in the 20th century (Ecklund 1979, 252–53), and advocated for ethnic pride as well as reformism. These men have interpreted Islamic law for their communities, defined what activities were *halal* (permitted) and *haram* (forbidden), and passed judgments on religio-cultural practices such as the performing arts. *Tuan Gurus* also stimulated the adaptations of pan-Islamic forms and/or the development of new musics. Until recently, their vision has been only local, giving direction to and shaping the Sasak Muslim community and its musical and cultural practices. Successful leaders negotiated the traditionalist worldview and took advantage of the messianic complex of many Sasak commoners to spread their influence.[8] The hundreds of *Tuan Gurus* over the last century posed a challenge to the national and provincial governments because followers preferred to observe the teachings of *Tuan Gurus* rather than national policies.[9] This tension has been largely resolved since many *Tuan Gurus* and other Hajis began filling government ranks decades ago, but the years in which many musics or their contexts were decreed as *haram* greatly reoriented Sasak performing arts.

The Coming of Islam

It is essential to briefly outline the history of Islam in Lombok in order to understand how certain music forms took root and how others were impacted by religious authority. Further, as Clegg asserts, "[t]he narrative of the arrival of Islam

forms the basis not only of Sasak cultural traits but is also central to self-definitions of ethnic boundaries and representations of Sasak identity" (2004, 161).

There are numerous legends and histories on the arrival and spread of Islam in Lombok, and these are frequently debated both by insiders and outsiders (see e.g., Clegg 2004, Hägerdal 2001, Harnish 2007, Budiwanti 2000, Wacana 1978 & 1992), who turn to a variety of contradictory early writings from Lombok, Java, and Europe. What seems to be clear is that sometime around the mid-16th century, a Javanese Sufi style of Islam, in which new or revised performing arts were used as vehicles to popularize the novel religion, was established, followed by a second wave of Islam from a variety of areas (Java, Makassar, and later, neighboring Sumbawa) that was orthodox in character. While the former belief was incorporated into and enhanced traditional *adat*, particularly in the northern and western parts of the island, the latter somewhat challenged the foundations of custom as many practitioners sought to implement Islamic law and actively converted Sasak in central and eastern parts of Lombok. Clearly, these are the forerunners of the Waktu Telu and Waktu Lima parties, later acknowledged as traditionalist and orthodox Muslims, who embrace what has been termed in Lombok as "local" and "universal" forms of Islam (see Budiwanti 2000).

To many Indonesian scholars, the legendary *wali sanga* (nine saints) were the ones to first spread Islam throughout the country; to many Sasak, one of these, Sunan Praben (sometimes called Pangeran Sangupati), first introduced the religion in Lombok, perhaps around 1545 (Cederroth 1981, 32). Some suggest that these evangelists spread a style of Sufism that had been reconciled with orthodoxy and developed by the saint, al-Ghazali (Zulkifli 2002, 7), and that after arriving in northern Lombok, Sunan Praben continued on to eastern or northeastern Lombok (Clegg 2004, 162). In any case, there is agreement that it was a Sufi-style Islam that first came to Lombok. As in other parts of Indonesia, Sufism, with its emphases on mystical union with God and veneration of saints, absorbed or was incorporated into local beliefs, adding another dimension to *adat* customary law. This style appears to have been implanted particularly in northern Lombok; most legends point to the village of Bayan as the entry point, and Bayan remains one of the last Waktu Telu strongholds. When discussing Sufism, however, it is important not to directly conflate the Waktu Telu beliefs with Sufism, because normative Sufism requires following Islamic law (*Shari'a*) and the Waktu Telu never embraced *Shari'a*; most, I would argue, never even heard the term until recent decades. Thus, it is a mistake to consider Waktu Telu or their ancestors Sufis.[10] It is better to posit the Waktu Telu faith as a form of Islam based on a Sufi model that was assimilated into a pre-existing, heterodox framework (Harnish 2007, 82–83 n.2). Sufi beliefs, on

the other hand, are actually commonly manifested in certain orthodox Muslim practices,[11] including pan-Islamic music forms.

In the mid-19th century, the *Naqsybandiyah* order of Sufism, named after the 14th century founder Baha ad-bin Naqsyabandiyah, arose in force in Java (Ricklefs 1993, 130) and found its way to Lombok, where it was embraced by those opposing Balinese rule. This was Sufism as an integral part of Sunni Islam, rather than as simply an inspiration for, or mystical dimension of, traditionalist *adat*. Following the overthrow of the Balinese and the establishment of the Dutch, the *Naqsyabandiyah* order, however, was pushed aside for more devout teachings that hardened during the new colonization and spread throughout urban centers around the island (see Clegg 2004, 177–178).

The early language vehicle for Islam, from perhaps as early as the 16th century, was Malay. Literature was often written using Arabic letters for Malay words, and many vocal and theater forms used Malay. *Hikayat* (from the Arabic word, story), for example, were centuries-old palm-leaf religious texts that were ritually sung in Malay and translated with commentary into Sasak;[12] the style has declined but the ritual sessions, now considered perhaps more cultural than religious, retain this structure, despite the fact that virtually all participants understand Malay today because of its similarity to Indonesian (see Figure 2.1).

Arabic terms, writing, and, eventually, songs became more and more common in the late 19th century, and after travel for the Hajj to Mecca and Medina was made easier, Sasak then left in droves to complete their obligation.[13] Still, with the exceptions of some *pesantren* and the town of Ampenan (with its considerable Arab influence), Arabic terms were not part of public discourse, even when discussing Islam, until as late as the 1970s. These were the years when Arabic welcoming phrases and exclamations and the terms *halal* and *haram* became commonly understood. These years mark a turn toward a more globally situated Islam.

Sociomusical Histories in Lombok

Much of what we might deem traditional Sasak music features gamelan ensembles, forms based on gong cycles, techniques such as interlocking parts, and indigenous tonal material related to the Javanese parent scales of *pelog* and *slendro*, sharing an overall aesthetic with Balinese ensemble music. Local legends place some of the earliest gamelans in the 14th century after subjugation by Hindu Java (see Harnish 1994), though music ensembles of some sort were no doubt in existence far before then. Some ensemble types clearly developed after interaction with Balinese migrants in following centuries, and also after Muslim

Figure 2.1. A man sings from a *hikayat* manuscript, Mataram, West Lombok, 1989. (Photo by author)

Javanese expeditions about the same time. These gamelans were performed for agricultural and life cycle rites, big feasts honoring nobility, and other ritual occasions.

According to some legends, followers accompanying the first Islamic mission to Lombok from Java included *wayang kulit* (shadow play) practitioners (Syamsu 1999, 114–15), whose performances helped popularize the religion. Some forms of music, dance, and theater that developed from the 17th–19th centuries either proselytized for Islam or presented narratives with Islamic content. Thus, from its very inception, Islam stimulated artistic activity and some arts were shaped by artists and leaders for further promotion. Nearly all of these early art forms, however, were embedded in traditionalist *adat* and were criticized or even banned in the 20th century by *Tuan Gurus* as distractions or deviations from true

Islam, for maintaining pre-Islamic elements, for allowing the consumption of alcohol, and/or for permitting the mixing of sexes.

I suggest that the degree of control a *Tuan Guru* had over a village's music was directly proportional to his religious authority. One strategy for exerting and consolidating power in a given village was to reorder music. The performing arts, usually predating such authority and often too slippery to fully control, were attractive, influential, and enculturative elements that could be reshaped to further one's own message and clout (see the Introduction to this volume). Many leaders borrowed the social framework and imagery of ruling nobles in establishing and dispensing their authority (see Cederroth 1981), and nobles always had their own empowering music. A new musical order—with some previous styles rejected, new ones embraced, and families (for life-cycle rites) and mosques (for religious holidays) required to follow the proper musical prescription—served to support and glorify the new religious authority, his overall message, and his vision of appropriate expression. The level to which a leader could control music performance was a barometer of his overall influence/power in the community.

Resistance to Balinese rule helped *Tuan Gurus* to accumulate power. After the 14th century, the Balinese influenced the western part of Lombok and assumed complete political control of this area sometime before the 17th century. Meanwhile, the eastern port of Labuhan Lombok maintained regular contact with Muslim and Arab traders, strengthening the development of Islam in the area as residents became part of the *umma* Muslim community (Clegg 2004, 170).[14] Balinese forces fought extensively with Sumbawanese, Sasak, and especially the Makasarrese forces that controlled East Lombok to rule the island before the mid-18th century. Balinese culture was then more fully transplanted into Lombok, stimulating Sasak musicians and ensembles, and also stimulating revolts in the more fully Islamized areas of central and eastern Lombok. These revolts, in turn, thrust forward *Tuan Gurus* as resistance leaders. The Dutch intervened in 1894 and colonized the island themselves (see van der Kraan 1980 and Hägerdal 2001); they also had to contend with religious leaders and occasional rebellions. Indonesian independence after World War II left Lombok administered by the central government in Java. In 1958, Lombok and Sumbawa became the new province of Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB). Since its political autonomy around 2000, NTB has largely governed itself, and Hajis and *Tuan Gurus* have assumed new government authority; indeed the current governor is a *Tuan Guru*. Music, naturally, was affected by all of the changing political climates; presently, many fear that the current administration intends to further dismantle both culture and arts.

For a number of reasons, 20th-century modernization—money economy, media, land ownership, communications, public education—worked to the benefit of reformist Islam and the decline of Waktu Telu. In addition, the well-known 1965 supposed communist coup attempted in Jakarta (see Kahin 2003) resulted in further undermining traditionalists, who were mostly farmers and had favored the communist party due to its land reform platform. In response to the ensuing disinformation campaign that targeted communists, thousands of Waktu Telu were killed, some simply because local reformists felt their beliefs were "unacceptable" (Muller 1991, 54). Many Waktu Telu quickly began following *Tuan Gurus* and proclaimed themselves Muslim for their own protection. In 1967, all Indonesians were ordered to register as believers of one of only four world faiths (Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, or Hinduism) (Cederroth 1981, 77). The Waktu Telu were compelled to choose Islam. Three immediate results were a sharp plunge in Waktu Telu numbers, an abandonment or prohibition of traditional rites and festivals, and the extensive loss of related music. Many religious leaders then asserted that any music or dance appearing to contrast with Islam (particularly if it was similar to Balinese styles) should be prohibited as non-Muslim. From this point of view, from the late 19th century throughout most of the 20th century, Islam was the rationale used to dismantle music in Lombok.[15]

But all religions inspire artistic reaction, and, just as its initial introduction centuries earlier opened new avenues of creativity, Islam again became both a stimulus and inspiration for the arts. Musicians modified acceptable forms of music to suit their needs, new ensembles appeared, regional Islamic styles were localized, and Hajis brought back to Lombok pan-Islamic song styles that many embraced.

Positions of Music in Reformist Lombok

A cognitive distinction that emerged from and was promoted by government offices in the 1970s and 1980s defines and separates recreational and ritual Sasak music, on the one hand, and Islamic music, on the other. The associated terms in Lombok are *seni musik tradisional* (traditional musical arts) and *seni musik Islam* (Islamic musical arts), sometimes shortened to *musik tradisional* and *musik Islam*. I will survey a few traditional performing arts dating from the early Islamic period; explore the problems inherent in these arts; describe several styles involved with the reformist movement that fall under the *musik Islam* category; examine the role of the government in shaping Sasak music, both traditional and Islamic, over recent decades; and then position modern Islamic music and the place of Sufism in contemporary Lombok.

Musik Tradisional

"Traditional music," according to government officials, includes those forms that precede the 20th century and are not now directly associated with Islam; some of these, however, did help popularize the religion in earlier years. The forms below, which generally functioned in *adat* ceremonies or situations, were selected for their core musical elements, which exemplify traditional Sasak music styles and/or their story narratives that remain familiar today to most island residents. These forms share both similar positions within local Islamic history and contemporary scrutiny from religious leaders.

Wayang Sasak is the Sasak *wayang kulit* shadow play performance, locally thought to have developed with the early spread of Islam (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3). Some local scholars, however, feel that *wayang* predated Islam and the story content switched from earlier stories (likely Hindu tales as in neighboring Bali) to Islamic ones after the initial spread of Islam in Lombok (see Harnish 2003). Performances typically were held at festivals honoring ancestors or heirlooms,

Figure 2.2. *Wayang Sasak* as demonstrated by elder master puppeteer Amaq Siwarti in Bongor, West Lombok, 2001. The character on the left is Jayengrana, and that on the right is Munigaram, his first wife; in this instance, however, these puppets represent Adam and Eve (*Hawa*) as the world is mystically recreated at the beginning of each performance. (photo by author)

Figure 2.3. *Wayang Sasak* in Lenek village, East Lombok, 1989. Though thoroughly Islamic, Lenek, through the agency of some cultural leaders, has maintained traditional performing arts and *adat*. (photo by author)

feasts, weddings and puberty rites, and rituals honoring Sasak nobility; all of these events were Waktu Telu ceremonies. The stories derive from the *Serat Menak* (book of the *Menak* nobles), featuring the hero Amir Hamzah, an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, generally in his guise of Jayaprana (usually pronounced Jayengrana), the humble and virtuous warrior who clears the path for Islam. The narrative is clear: Islam is the true and righteous path and its warriors do not lose. These elements marked *wayang Sasak* as an agent of *dakwa* (bringing people to Islam). The process of the narrative, however, is less Islamic: it is embedded in a hero cult; the language used excludes Arabic (considered necessary today to be truly Islamic); the accompanying gamelan uses *pelog* tuning and gong cycles; and the spiritual asceticism depicted parallels that presented in Hindu tales. Since the rise of reformism, and particularly in the mid- to late 20th century, *wayang* has often been forbidden by religious leaders on the grounds that it depicts human forms, fosters belief in ancestors and magic, maintains pre-Islamic elements, and, overall, is an inappropriate medium for the transmission of Islam. *Wayang Sasak*, along with various traditional music and dance forms, thus began to sharply decline in the late 20th century, and several music forms dating from the same period (e.g., *kecimol*) disappeared altogether or assumed new forms.[16]

Another theater style that was sometimes restrained was *kemidi rudat*, a genre found in various forms throughout much of Indonesia (see Cohen 2006);

Pätzold (in this volume) suggests West Java as the place of *rudat*'s origin, where its position, though established at *pesantren* and formulated to spread Islam through movement arts, is similarly tenuous. Based on "1,001 Nights" (or "1,001 Arabic Nights"), the Sasak *kemidi rudat* includes songs, dances, humor, and drama in which the young noble hero travels with his warriors, fights non-Islamic rulers or demons, woos a princess, and demonstrates his good character. Similar to some other forms of *stamboel* theater (and early Islam), the language is Malay. The music accompaniment—with strings, frame drums, linear structure, diatonic melodies, and monophonic or heterophonic texture—is more aligned with the "reformist" aesthetic (emulating Arabic music) than the gong cycle- and *pelog*-oriented traditionalist aesthetic. Nevertheless, *kemidi rudat* has sometimes come under fire for its distractive qualities, language structure, and traditionalist performance context (see Figure 2.4).[17]

Sometime between the late 19th century and the early 20th century, religious leaders in some districts began to prohibit other existing traditional music in their areas of influence. One primary problem was the use of bronze. The "voice" (*suara*) of bronze instruments was associated with Waktu Telu beliefs in ancestors, so leaders apparently felt that they should work to end the use of these instruments as a way to undermine those beliefs (see Harnish 1988). One ensemble that was formed in response was the gamelan *rebana*. Musicians adapted *rebana*

Figure 2.4. Staged *rudat* performance, Mataram, West Lombok, 1983. (photo by author)

frame drums (used in styles of pan-Islamic music), manufactured different sizes of these drums to mimic the functions of bronze metallophones and gongs, then formed an ensemble that replicates traditional gamelan music but with the new acceptable performance vehicle. Though not now as popular as in former decades, the gamelan *rebana* consists of flute (*suling*), iron cymbals (*ceng ceng*), and numerous drums at different pitches including two large hanging "gongs" ("col" and "cil," the same terms used for bronze gongs), and is still performed in a number of towns and villages, particularly to accompany marriage rituals.

The gamelan *rebana* has persevered without controversy because the instruments were changed from bronze to goatskin; musicians understood the problem and were creative in maintaining the music, which preserves the tonality (*pelog*), musical elements, and aesthetic of earlier Waktu Telu gamelans.[18] As suggested earlier, most forms for modern consumption utilize diatonicism rather than *pelog*, more linear structures rather than gong cycles, strings and vocals over bronze gamelan instruments, and monophony or heterophony over the dense texture of gamelan music (see Harnish 1988) in approximating an Arab aesthetic. By simply exchanging bronze for membranes, gamelan *rebana* was approved for performance; this may suggest that the visual has sometimes been more important than the aural in the determinations of religious leaders. Gamelan *rebana* remains an approved, uncontroversial form of *musik tradisional* (see Figure 2.5). Despite the use of *rebana* drums, which link this gamelan[19] to pan-Islamic styles and suggest throughout the archipelago an Islamic underpinning, this is clearly not *musik Islam*.

Musik Islam

Various forms of *musik Islam* are performed at some life cycle rites such as weddings and circumcisions (not, however, at funerary ceremonies); for Islamic holidays such as *Idul Fitri* (*Eid el-Fitr*, the feast after Ramadan), *Maulud* (Muhammad's birthday), and localized observations such as *Lebaran Topat* (held one week after *Idul Fitr*); and on regular ritual occasions such as Thursday nights. All varieties of *musik Islam* feature vocals (solo or group-singing)—either accompanied or a cappella—and are sung in the Arabic language.

Zikrzamman (remembrance of the time),[20] a men's a cappella style, is probably the best-known form of *seni musik Islam* in Lombok. Developed both within brotherhoods at mosques and at some *pesantren*, it is a variant of the *dhikr* (remembrance, repetition) performance styles found elsewhere in Indonesia and throughout much of the Islamic world. Although *zikrzamman* is a ritual and not considered a performance by many participants I have met, none have a problem identifying

Figure 2.5. Gamelan *rebana* in performing arts competition, Narmada, West Lombok, 1989. (photo by author)

the content as music; some, in fact, have mentioned that they wish to absorb religion via art, specifically *zikrzamman*. These rituals are usually performed in mosques on Thursday nights, on Islamic holidays (*Maulud*, *Idul Fitri*, and events surrounding the Hajj), and occasionally during the day for less religious occasions. The texts come from the unique *Barzanji*, a series of stories about Muhammad and his sayings that some local leaders say was first compiled and published in Banten. Part of the text appears to derive from the *Maulud* (or *Maulid*) eulogy of the Iraqi Kurdish scholar and Sufi leader, Imam as-Sayyid Ja'far ibn Hasan ibn 'Abdal Karim al-Barzanji (1690–1766 CE); hence, the text's title.[21]

The music within some *zikrzamman* brotherhoods consists of nine distinct sections that modulate to different scales as in Arabic *maqamat* traditions. Men sit in two lines (though the configuration will change during the evening), and sing (often responsorially) through nine long song segments with associated choreography, often including standing salutes, ovations, rocking, or other movements. The *hadi* (chant leader) determines the length of each section. The chant, altered breathing, and movement, coupled with religious text and context and the men's concentration, can lead to trance-like states (see Figure 2.6). When entranced, the men maintain their singing and choreography, though they perform with greater energy.[22]

There are several other vocal forms based on or inspired by global Islamic traditions. *Burdah*[23] is a form of hymn singing that involves a group of men

Figure 2.6. Zikrzamman at a mosque on a Thursday night in Sayang Sayang village, West Lombok, 1989. (photo by author)

(sometimes only Hajis) playing large *rebana* drums (also called *terbana* or *terbang*) while singing (Harnish 1998, 776). The poetry, *qasidah burdah*, is in varied meters and includes prayers and praises to Allah, Muhammad, the Qur'an, the spiritual *jihads* (inner moral struggles) of saints and the Prophet, and calls for restraint of lust. Performances are often connected to weddings. *Qasidah rebana* is musically similar to *burdah* with poetry in mixed meters, one or more *rebana* drums, and praise songs sung by soloists or groups; it is found throughout much of Islamic Indonesia and especially in Java. *Hadrah* ("presence"),[24] a global form in Malay-Islamic packaging perhaps introduced from Sumbawa, is very similar to *zikrzamman*. It is generally held on Thursday evenings after prayer, on Fridays after prayer, or Sunday evenings and features various forms of poetic remembrance. Orders, often established within brotherhoods, sing devotional texts, sermons,

Seni Musik Tradisional	Seni Musik Islam
Wayang Sasak (early Islam)	Zikrzamman
Kemidi Rudat (early Islam)	Hadrah
Gamelan Rebana (non-Islamic/approved)	Burdah
Gendang Beleq (non-Islamic/aestheticized)	Qasidah Rebana

Figure 2.7. Table of *seni musik tradisional* and *seni musik Islam* forms.

religious exhortations, praises to God and/or the Prophet, rhythmic invocations of Allah, requests for intercession, and testimonies of faith in accompaniment to choreographed movement that can lead to trance-like states.

These pan-Islamic vocal forms in Arabic all use diatonic tonality and are performed particularly on holidays, when they are thought to be especially spiritually meritorious. Though all are similarly rooted, the two most clearly Sufi forms are *zikrzamman* and *hadrah*. Both of these rituals are guided by a leader or teacher, who directs the spiritual experience and helps shape the inner development of the participants. This master-participants structure is found in Sufi forms/communities throughout the world.

Figure 2.7 aligns the *musik tradisional* and *musik Islam* forms discussed in this paper.

Music and the Government

The provincial government of Nusa Tenggara Barat, consisting of Lombok and Sumbawa, has sought to be, and largely succeeded in being, intricately involved in regional musical developments. The tension between traditional music and modernized Islam was largely negotiated through the government, often via the Ministry of Religion. The increasing numbers of former religious leaders in the provincial government over recent decades helped to ease the reception of policies within towns and villages across Lombok.

One governmental strategy was to take traditional performing arts, detraditionalize them (that is, extricate them from their contexts; see Heelas, Lash, and Morris 1996), and then aestheticize them (that is, to maximize artistry and present them in an idealized manner) for public, ahistorical, presentational performances. Officials arranged competitions (which furthered showmanship and virtuosity) and rewarded winners, organized staged shows for local consumption,

offered grants for groups to upgrade music and dance to an Indonesian (or, rather, a Javanese) standard, and organized arts and performing groups for tourism to initiate the detraditionalization process. The Arts Section of the regional and local Ministry of Education and Culture spearheaded these efforts (see Harnish 2007). From the officials' point of view, these arts were worthy and should be preserved to sustain regional identity and integrate national values, and to ward off Western influences as Sasak society modernized. Their mandate, as they understood it particularly during the *Orde Baru* government of President Suharto (1967–1998), was to support, preserve, and innovate the arts. This effort, similar to projects in Java and elsewhere in Indonesia, was a way of classicizing suitable music traditions, making them palatable for an emerging, modernizing middle class by selecting and elevating particular and appropriate symbols and forms (see Chatterjee 1993, 127); the revised arts organized and sanitized internal diversity, assisted in the ongoing work of nationalizing regional cultures, and furthered the accompanying ideologies of progress and growth. Religious leaders, including those within the government, approved of these revised arts as long as they did not function in traditionalist, or non-Islamic, ceremonies and were stripped of their earlier associations.

Certain traditionalist forms, including *kemidi rudat* and *wayang Sasak*, were modified, aestheticized, and staged in decontextualized venues. Whatever these forms had previously represented changed. This change disengaged local meanings and furthered national agendas (essentially the goal of the governmental arts policies). The most ambitious and successful government project was converting the gamelan *gendang beleq* (large drum) from a traditionalist ensemble to a regional form that could represent all of Lombok and symbolize modernism. Detraditionalization gave the government a strategy to preserve and revise this form to fit a modern secularized vision, and then to make the music and ensemble widely available to communities throughout Lombok.

With government assistance[25] and the encouragement of most religious leaders, new clubs of boys replaced men as players and gamelan *gendang beleq* soon became, by far, the most popular music/dance form in Lombok's history. The ensemble, which earlier functioned in traditionalist agricultural rites, feasts, and life-cycle rites but then fell out of favor in many areas, returned to perform at marriages throughout much of the island and at provincial and national events, where it now features a spectacular and aestheticized virtuosity providing a sanitized, state-sanctioned ambience that identifies Sasak tradition and ethnicity (see Figure 2.7).

The government also wanted to help develop, shape, and perhaps control the category of *musik Islam*, and so officials organized similar decontextualized venues and competitions (see Figures 2.8 and 2.9). The Ministry of Religion

Figure 2.8. Zikrzamman staged by a youth club at performing arts competition in Mataram, West Lombok, 1989. (photo by author)

initiated at least three music-related contests. One, *Lomba Takbiran* (*Takbiran* contest), involves men chanting the "Allahu Akbar" formula over and over again; another, *Lomba Baca Al Qur'an* (Quranic reading contest), awards groups (individuals representing teams) that best recite the Qur'an; and the third, *Lomba Bedhug* (*bedhug* contest), features the *bedhug* barrel drum struck over and over again vigorously.[26] The *Lomba Takbiran* and *Lomba Bedhug*, both developed in the 1990s, are generally held on *Idul Fitri*, the feast celebration following Ramadan (Harnish 2007, 75). These are further examples of performance traditions removed from specific contexts and aestheticized for public display; the underlying intent seems to have been to define the traditional and the religious, and to nationalize, modernize, and attempt to control the production and reception of music.

A major government approach to arts development was to organize tours or performances of upgraded music and dance styles for local consumption and education. Officials called these *paket tradisional* (traditional "package") when arts like *gendang beleq* were featured, and *paket religi* (religious "package") when staging pan-Islamic forms such as *zikrzamman*[27] or newer Islamic forms. Often both *pakets* were presented for regional contests and for major state affairs such as the celebration of Independence Day. These strategies utilized the talents of

Figure 2.9. A *hadrah* club from neighboring Sumbawa walks in procession with *Sasak* musicians and dancers representing both *seni musik tradisional* and *seni musik Islam* forms for provincial founding holiday, Mataram, West Lombok, 1988. (photo by author)

government arts and religious leaders, satisfied the charge from the national government to develop the arts, and helped to shape new and modernized concepts of performance, religion, aesthetics, and ethnic identity. Lindsay refers to this arts transition as moving "from ritual to spectacle" (1995), Sutton describes it as from "ritual enactment to staged entertainment" (1998), Acciaiolo calls such national production efforts "contrived" spectacles where local or regional diversity is engaged but ultimately marginalized as national agendas are empowered (1985), and Rasmussen, discussing religious music forms, refers to the phenomenon as the "festivalization of religion" (2001). Upgraded and more spectacular arts not only impact local culture but better entertain tourists, too; for this reason, the Ministry of Tourism[28] has also been involved in some of these music/dance intervention and development projects.

Modern Islamic Music and the Role of Sufism

Nearly all of the music forms that fall into the category of *seni musik Islam* are (sometimes localized) global or pan-Islamic styles that derive from Sufi practice, such as *zikrzamman*, *burdah*, and *hadrah*; indeed, the Sufi connection may be

paramount in most of Indonesia's Islamic music. My conversations with musicians indicate that they either are not aware of the link to Sufism or that it does not concern them. Sufism (originally *Tasawwuf*) is not discredited in most of the island, though it has been accused of deviating from the true faith (Clegg 2004, 180); most residents in my experience, however, are not familiar with the term. This may be because Sufism and Sufi were not part of common Indonesian language until the 1970s (Howell 2001, 702), the same years in which many more Arabic terms defining religious practice were locally introduced and circulated. Some Muslims, it appears, embrace practices, including music, that qualify as Sufi even when those same individuals might otherwise hold that Sufism deviates from scripturalist Islam. Others are aware of Sufism and object to Sufi practices. Such people tend to be educated, modernist Muslims who do not approve on the basis that the obligatory prayers and observance of Islamic law are the whole of the spiritual path, that other mystical or inner (*batin*) practices are indicated neither in the Qur'an nor Hadith literature, and that ancestor worship rites such as feasting at gravesites or lighting candles for the dead on holidays (often categorized as "Sufi," here related to traditionalist *adat*) diverge from the true faith.

Unlike the situation on Java (see Howell 2001, 701), many *pesantren* in Lombok do not promote Sufi-related music forms, such as the widespread *dhikr* (remembrance of God) or the local equivalent, *zikrzamman*. Most of these *pesantren* and the *Tuan Gurus* who developed them were instead inspired by late 19th and early 20th century reformist practices, particularly by the Shafi'i school of Sunni Islam, which dismissed mysticism and adhered to strict teachings of *Shari'a* (Clegg 2004, 180); music has thus neither been a major spiritual tool within these schools nor an instrument to spread influence. My research suggests that the forms of *musik Islam* have come directly from Hajis and *Tuan Gurus*, who are exposed to these practices during their religious training in the Middle East or encounter them on other Indonesian islands and then institutionalize them at mosques or within brotherhoods formed at mosques, their own schools, and in organizations such as the national Nahdlatul Ulama and the local Nahdhutul Watan.[29] The brotherhoods are referred to as *tarekat*, a term that underlines the Sufi element, where music is a core element of prayer to the Prophet and select saints. Participants come from both urban and village environments, and are somewhat independent of many schools and the government. While the government has been encouraging musical activity representing Islam, and, of course, wanting to have a hand in shaping the end product, most of the developments have antecedents in the agency of local leaders, who have brought back and directly spread such forms as *zikrzamman*, *burdah*, and *hadrah*.

Lombok was certainly party to the revival of Islam in Indonesia that was initiated in the 1970s. I would argue, however, that the island had experienced

earlier profound spurts of Islamization, dating from the Balinese colonial period, which placed Islam as the dominating sociopolitical force perhaps a century before the 1970s. Lombok was one of the few Islamic areas in world history to be governed by Hindus (see Hägerdal 2001), and the resistance that developed would grow steadily over 200 years until religious leaders found their way onto the seats of governing power, while the traditionalists, and much of their music, were pushed to near oblivion. In the meantime local reformist organizations (e.g., Nahdhutul Watan) and political parties (e.g., the early Masjumi) worked for purism in religious practice. The next big event to impact the island was the supposed attempted communist coup in Jakarta in 1965; in Lombok, this led to the slaughter of thousands of Waktu Telu and the marginalization of thousands more. Today, Islam is so implanted in the consciousness of some citizens that they do not acknowledge following any Sasak traditions—not consciously, at least. Clegg (2004, 4) reports that when the government requests citizens in some areas to wear *adat* clothing for public, secular holidays to participate and show ethnic pride, residents may opt to instead wear Islamic robes marking them as Hajis or Hajas (women), and may not own any traditional dress at all. For many, *Shari'a* has also become their *adat*.

In the aftermath of such recent developments, Sufism—and its inspired music forms—has not grown along with the religious revival, which strongly favors scriptural Islam over mysticism or inner development. Nevertheless, because of the general ignorance of what constitutes Sufism, many actually participate in Sufi practices, which they likely do for the direct spiritual experience, for the spiritual bonding with fellow followers, or, as Chittick suggests, for "the interiorization and intensification of Islamic faith and practice" (1995, 102). While Sufism is often conflated with traditionalist *adat*, in its global music manifestation it is embedded in what is considered orthodox practice in Lombok. These forms are rarely contested and generally considered exceptional activities to both uphold *Shari'a* and develop inner spiritual strength.

Concluding Thoughts

It was my intention in this chapter to provide an overview to the unique issues of music and Islam in Lombok, and to explicate how and why global Islamic forms have been locally adopted and promoted. The current situation can only be understood in light of Lombok's problematic history, a history that blends *adat*, gamelans, traditionalists, Hindu Balinese, and early arts forms that first popularized Islam hundreds of years ago, as well as the dramatic rise of *Tuan Gurus*, Hajis, religious schools, the prohibition of most earlier forms, the nurturing of *seni musik Islam*

forms, and the direct involvement of government officials, policies, and ministries to the election of a religious leader, Tuan Guru Bajang, grandson of Tuan Guru Zainuddin Abdul Majid, as governor in 2008. From a political position, all parties have desired to shape music to propel their own agendas. For traditionalists, this is preserving their culture and *adat* in line with the teachings of their ancestors; for reformists, this is increasing, purifying, and defining the faith while demonstrating mysteries to select *tarekat* followers; for the government, this is nationalizing and modernizing ethnic identity while attempting to shape Islamic music and revising traditional forms. From a spiritual position, traditionalists have maintained music to function in ritual—often to form a bridge to the ancestors (see Harnish 2006)—while reformists have shaped music with Sufi roots into a transformational experience that enhances *Shari'a* and one's connection to God. The current provincial government under Tuan Guru Bajan thus far shows no interest in supporting either culture or the arts, perhaps creating new challenges for both traditionalists and previously supported forms.

Research in Lombok necessarily incorporates religion. It is so engrained in common discourse among musicians, government officials, and just about everyone else that it is impossible to research music without directly addressing religion. The reasons for this passion are not simply to bring people closer to God, but rather to label and place oneself and others. This pre-understanding is necessary in social interaction. The concept of *umma*, a great tool for unification during colonizations, remains powerful and motivates the desire to purify and expand local religious practice. For some modernist Sasak, the fact that Waktu Telu still exist is embarrassing, because these traditionalists maintain beliefs from a painful past ignorant of not only the true global faith but also the modern world. *Adat* stands for the same problems, and this issue may reveal not only a disrespect of or disengagement with traditional culture but also a less established ethnic identity. With Dutch and Balinese colonial periods, extensive Javanese influence over centuries, and so many incursions from cultures on nearby islands (Sumbawa and especially Makassar), Sasak culture was rarely fixed or dominant. Islam offered a path to liberation from foreign, non-Islamic control and to a broadened, newly developed sociocultural consciousness. Thus, religion has been at the forefront of worldview leading both to extensive debate and ubiquitous visual display (e.g., mosques in plentitude, Islamic robes for government-sponsored *adat* ceremonies).[30]

In the 19th- and 20th-century effort to reform, religious leaders attempted to clamp down on traditional music (including those forms that once popularized Islam) and its contexts, and Islamic music forms were advanced (often outside of religious schools). While the agency of musicians crafted the gamelan *rebana*, several traditional forms declined, disappeared, or were preserved only by

dwindling numbers of Waktu Telu, and the acceptable music aesthetic changed from *pelog/slendro* and gong cycles to diatonicism and linear form. In the late 20th century, the provincial government worked to direct and modernize Sasak music—to preserve traditional music through the process of detraditionalization, and to shape Islamic music through developing new forms, venues, and contests. While the government had little control over Islamic music practices within *pesantren*, brotherhoods, or other religious orders, officials could privilege forms that best represented the profile and efforts of the state.

The four Islamic music styles introduced here—*zikrzamman*, *burdah*, *hadrah*, *qasidah rebana*—constitute local manifestations of transnational styles. These have accompanied a dynamic movement away from *adat* and toward a more thorough embrace of *Shari'a* and *agama*. This movement does not traverse only in one direction, however, and must also adapt to changing government policies, national and provincial developments, religious organizations, and leaders. Accordingly, a branch of the movement has become progressive: Women now have their own *hadrah* and *qasidah* groups. Such developments, put into action by religious leaders both in and outside of government, reflect broader trends within Indonesian Islam and government policies (in this case, women's emancipation). With more religious figures in government and traditionalists believed to have declined except in some rural areas, the tensions between *adat* and *agama* have diminished; tradition and *adat* are now largely decontextualized and performed to promote national agendas and preserve cultural identity, while Islam is the one dominating and authentic *agama*.

Notes

1. The North Lombok local government recently recognized the Waktu Telu faith as *adat* and not as an official religion, confirming H. Lalu Wiramaja's position and demonstrating that the government does not recognize these traditionalists as Muslims or as followers of any particular religion. The Waktu Telu, however, consider themselves Muslims who practice their faith in accordance with early teachers. Most foreign scholars (along with some local officials) consider them "traditionalist," "syncretist," or "nominal" Muslims.

2. Clegg (2004, 198) clarifies that in the harbor city of Ampenan, which houses the majority of Arabs, there is a sharp distinction between *Sayyid* (descent from the Prophet) and non-*Sayyid* (other Arabs). However, in much of Lombok, "Arab" is synonymous with "Sayyid."

3. Many Sasak are proud of a second motto—"pulau seribu mesjid" ("island of 1,000 mosques")—often coined to define the religiosity of Lombok. Despite the pride, this figure might be low as some local estimates indicate up to 2,000 mosques on the island.

4. Interestingly, since the 21st century period of autonomy, the political agenda has pushed forward *adat* activities, though largely at the level of commercialized display rather than belief, much to the chagrin of Muslim reformers. This agenda seems to have changed within the current provincial government, which strongly favors religion over culture and the arts.

5. Often given the title Syekh, his full name after completing the pilgrimage and establishing religious schools was Tuan Guru Kyai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Majid. His date of birth is sometimes given as 1904, and "Majid" is sometimes "Madjid."

6. Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912 by Ahmad Dahlan, is the second largest Islamic organization in the country. A social and educational entity, it was established largely to eradicate syncretism from Indonesian Islam.

7. On the other hand, many risk financial ruin going on the Hajj. Some sell their lands to acquire the funds; some also abandon their children.

8. Many local legends point to coming messiahs or religious leaders who will return Lombok to a golden period. Some *Tuan Gurus* deliberately exploited these beliefs in establishing their reputations and followings (see further Cederroth 1981).

9. In the early 21st century, some *Tuan Gurus* have acquired their own private militias, *pam swakarsa*, which guard them, protect favored political candidates and officials, and help to fight crime.

10. As there is no centralized Waktu Telu faith, there are no standardized practices. In some areas, only the *kyai* religious figure fasts during Ramadan, he may be the only one to pray five (or three) times a day, many do not attend the mosque on Friday, and ancestor worship is prominent (for example, during agricultural rites and grave-cleaning rituals). Many Sasak are moderates. They attend the mosque, pray, and aspire to the Hajj, but they may also participate in Waktu Telu life-cycle or agricultural rites if they live in a rural area. These people are normally considered Muslims and not labeled Waktu Telu. Many urban Sasak intellectuals mistakenly believe that the Waktu Telu and their culture have disappeared, and, in fact, the polar opposite terms "Waktu Telu" and "Waktu Lima" were officially abandoned in 1968. "Waktu Lima" seems to have discontinued in public rhetoric, and the discourse today identifies Muslims and non-Muslims (the latter prominently includes Waktu Telu, Hindu Balinese, and Christians).

11. This would include, for example, praying or feasting at gravesites of religious leaders, particularly on days such as *Lebaran Topat*, a Sasak ritual feast (apparently in existence in a few other traditionalist Muslim cultures in Indonesia) held one week after *Idul Fitri* (*Eid El-Fitr*) at the conclusion of Ramadan. Reformist Muslims dismiss these actions and rituals, which are mentioned in neither the Qur'an nor Hadith literature.

12. A similar tradition is known throughout much of the archipelago. The process of recitation and translation or extemporizing upon the text is related but distinct in the various areas.

13. It is widely understood that a larger percentage of Muslims from Lombok complete the Haj than those from any other island in Indonesia.

14. Becoming part of the *umma* optimized trade with all other Muslim areas, and this *umma* later formed a united bond against European trading powers.

15. This paper does not position popular music in these arguments, mainly because the industry on Lombok is underdeveloped. To my knowledge, religious leaders have thus far largely ignored the style, and few local artists have worked in popular music to promote Islam. *Nasyid* and *orkes gambus* (see Berg in this volume) are two popular Islamic styles that are now occasionally performed and recorded in Lombok. The *gambus* lute, earlier called *penting* in Lombok, has a long history of accompanying folk poetry in small ensembles and only recently assumed Islamic associations.

16. Pressure from religious leaders was, by no means, the only reason for the decline of these forms. The instruments of modernization—education, radio, television, film—had an equal role. *Wayang Sasak* has been maintained in several villages and the government has offered various forms of assistance for its preservation.

17. This does not mean that all religious leaders disapprove. Many, in fact, approve. One *Tuan Guru* in East Lombok is rumored to manage his own group.

18. Some groups have even adopted Balinese gamelan *gong kebyar* compositions.

19. The word "gamelan," by itself, places the ensemble in the *seni musik tradisional* camp. "Gamelan" is not used in association with *seni musik Islam*.

20. Some have stated that *zikrzamman* refers to the era (*zaman*) and teachings of a 13th-century Iraqi Sufi saint, al-Sammani. The dance is often spelled *zikir saman* and some, such as H. Lalu Wiramaja (cited in the opening) and several government officials, believe that it came from the *saman* dance in Aceh. Banten in West Java is also often given as its place of origin, and some believe the dance was originally introduced by Syekh Sammani; a *tarekat* order called *Sammaniyah* or *Sammiyah* may claim Sammani as a saint. A form similar to *zikrzamman* is found in Sumbawa (Proyek Pembinaan Kesenian 2000, 7). "Remember the time" is commonly given as the dance title's meaning. A few have said that this refers to a time when Muhammad met his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, to discuss his legacy. This imagined meeting is interesting because it implies a Shi'a, rather than Sunni, connection for these followers. Another meaning often given to the title is praying to Allah repetitively and remembering the creator (*zikir*) while moving repetitively (*saman*) (Ibid, 9).

21. The text is known in other areas of Indonesia and as *Maulid Barzanji* in Malaysia, where it is sung in honor of Muhammad's birthday and for weddings and circumcisions. It is widely published in Southeast Asia. Apparently, some *zikrzamman* groups sing poetry devised by their religious leaders in Arabic or Indonesian (Proyek Pembinaan Kesenian 2000, 11), though I have never heard these groups perform.

22. I once attended a performance on a Thursday evening in the small village of Sayang Sayang in West Lombok. Despite (or maybe partially because of) the complete darkness, the tremendous energy and focused concentration of the performance convinced me that most of the men were indeed in trance.

23. "Burdah" or "burda" refers to the Prophet's mantle, cloak, or scarf.

24. Sonneborn (1995) asserts that *hadrah* has a long history, is related to *dhikr*, and derives from *sama'* (audition, hearing) rituals that are core to Sufism. All such Sufi forms are overseen by a master.

25. Government offices provided grants for instruments, music specialists to teach the style, and dance experts to rearrange the choreography. Officials decided to target boys, who otherwise might lose their culture and adopt Western values. The strategy was also meant to make these boys better and more modern Sasak/Indonesian citizens.

26. The *bedhug* has a long history at mosques in Lombok (and elsewhere in Indonesia), where it was used originally to signal the call to prayer (*adzan* or *adhan*) and also to signal the deaths of community members. Many mosques maintain an instrument for nostalgic reasons. Youth clubs take charge in the competitions, and elders seem to be happy that the instruments are again being played. The *bedhug* is also used in the *mesjid-mini* contests in parades following the end of Ramadan, which feature constructed miniature mosques with youth organizations (*remaja mesjid*) in the backs of trucks or on floats often singing or playing music while slowly cruising through the provincial capital of Mataram.

27. At one staged *zikrzamman* show I witnessed in 1989, the performers omitted men and featured boys and the choreography added martial arts movements. As with *musik tradisional*, *musik Islam* forms are normally upgraded or otherwise modified for such events (see Figure 7). Many local scholars call this a transition from "agama" to "seni" (art).

28. Around 2000, a new Indonesian Ministry—Culture and Tourism—was formed out of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Tourism. With this new structure, some skeptics suggest that culture may become reduced to entertainment.

29. Tuan Guru Kyai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Majid, the most prominent 20th-century *Tuan Guru*, is credited with establishing *tarekat* orders and embracing Sufi-related forms in his schools. *Tarekat* apparently are no longer emphasized within NW *pesantren*, though they are in *pesantren* of Nahdlatul Ulama and of the *Sammiyah* and *Naqsybandiyah* orders.

30. Sasak have a preponderance for visual presentation. Religious clothing is often used as a social and religious badge. The gamelan *rebana*, with its Islamic-associated frame drums, was largely formed due to its approved visual image and material.

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Part II

Mysticism and Devotion

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3

"The Muslim Sisterhood": Religious Performance, Transnational Feminism(s), and the Particularity of Indonesia

Anne K. Rasmussen

Unlike most of the contributors in the volume, Anne Rasmussen looks at Islamic musical performance rather than at the ways a particular musical genre, region, or community has been influenced by religion. Her ethnographic work with professional female reciters of the Qur'an and in myriad contexts where Islamic musical arts are routinely produced and enjoyed by women and girls supports two general assertions of the volume and one important conclusion derived specifically from Rasmussen's research. Her descriptions of contexts that combine Quranic recitation with group singing and rehearsed music and choreography testify to the interdependence of religion and music as well as to the creative adaptation of Islamic practice in the Indonesian archipelago. The women she describes are not anomalous practitioners but rather participants and shareholders alongside men in the practices and the institutions of Islamic Indonesia. Furthermore, in addition to simply doing what men do, women can be the beneficiaries of the intellectual and spiritual capital the religion provides. In her chapter, she suggests that an underlying framework of egalitarianism that is atypical of Middle Eastern Muslim cultures should, at least, be acknowledged, particularly in light of the scholarship on Muslim women in the Arab world and Middle East. Rasmussen asks several questions of a group of women who recite the Qur'an as professionals and at the amateur level. For example: How does Islam offer women reciters professional and personal avenues of empowerment? To what extent is women's (Muslim) work an act of resistance or an aspect of repression? Derived from her book-length study of the topic and based on two years of ethnographic research, Rasmussen's contribution evaluates the work of contemporary Muslim feminist writers and scholars of gender and Islam as it relates, or not, to the Indonesian women with whom she worked. Although she identifies points of convergence, she submits that the particularity of any ethnographic research should reveal a diversity of culturally specific meanings and practices. Her

chapter is a cautionary tale that demonstrates the danger of defining Indonesian women under the rubric of a world religion that is too often painted and viewed with the platitudes and normative stereotypes of the broad brush.

The Subject of Women and Muslim Indonesia

Consider the following dyads: "Women and Islam," "Music and Islam," "Human Rights and Islam," "Democracy and Islam," and any number of other thematic categories that title newspaper articles, unify academic conferences and courses, and advertise art exhibits. All painted with broad, inclusive but conclusive brushstrokes by scholars, journalists, and artists, such pairings tend to engrave an impression of a religion that has both individual agency and universal application. Rooted in the orientalist frameworks of European intellectual, political, and artistic history, the tendency to "otherize" and essentialize Muslims and Islam has been rejuvenated in the contemporary moment due to conflicting but complementary motives. On the one hand, there is a pressing need and desire, particularly among non-Muslims, to come to know and understand the peoples and cultures of the Muslim world and their religion. This genuine curiosity is balanced, however, by an impatient requirement to command, contain, and control knowledge about Islam in the world in order to establish some sort of causality between religion, difference, and conflict among peoples and cultures. With the title of this chapter "The Muslim Sisterhood," we might imagine a unified community of women empowered or perhaps disempowered through and by religious performance; however, this work actually muddies clear understandings of women, of Muslims, and of Indonesians, because it derives from an ethnographically situated experience of humanity. Thus, my contribution to this volume takes its place alongside the efforts of scholars, performers, and educators who work against the grain of unitary and unifying conclusions. I try to stress, rather, the particularity of the women I represent, or, the unique position and singular situation of the women in Indonesia that I came to know.[1]

A remarkable aspect of Indonesian Islamic practice is the involvement of women in the work, the rituals, and the popular expressions of Islam. My research has involved women who are professional reciters of the Qur'an, teachers, judges, media stars, religious aficionados, ritual specialists, singers, employees of the state, and feminist activists. These communities of religious specialists that I came to know in Jakarta are bolstered by women from more remote cities, towns, and villages throughout the Indonesian archipelago and by young girls who are in training.

Figure 3.1. Palu, Sulawesi: Young woman preparing for the national competition in Quranic recitation, June 2004. (photo by author)

Scholarship on women and gender in Southeast Asian cultures generally promotes the view that complementarity and equality characterize the interaction between men and women in this region, especially when compared to the neighboring areas of South Asia, China, or the Muslim Middle East (see Ramusack 1999, 79). Ramusack, in her survey of the pre-modern region summarizes representations of women as either "bright butterflies" or "shrewd traders" (83). She writes:

> Many sources on women in Southeast Asia comment on their relatively high social position and link it to their economic autonomy, the veneration of fertility in indigenous religions, and bilateral kinship systems in which descent and property may pass through both the male and female lines. (83)[2]

While the theory of gender equality in Southeast Asia is seductive, certain scholars have cautioned that this conclusion is too simplistic. Ong and Peletz, for example, have called for a revision of what they identify as "dominant scholarly conceptions of gender in Southeast Asia focused on egalitarianism, complementarity, and the relative autonomy of women in relation to men" (1995, 1). Despite the inevitable inequalities borne of patriarchy, deftly identified by Ong and Peletz, and confirmed with certainty by the Muslim female professionals and feminists I interviewed for this project, the practices of Indonesian Muslim women working "in the trenches" of religious life suggest that an underlying tendency toward egalitarianism is both particular to the region and deeply rooted.

Andaya, one of the scholars we identify in the Introduction whose scholarship contributes to a rethinking of the "arrival" of Islam in the Southeast Asia, also questions the ways in which world religions have reconstructed conceptions of gender in the early modern period. She writes:

> From the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the advance of Islam and Christianity in island Southeast Asia introduced new articulations of messages stressing female spiritual and intellectual weakness. This issue is especially pertinent to Southeast Asian societies because in many areas women and sexually ambiguous individuals played a leading role in indigenous rituals and in communication with the spirit world . . . Across the region it is possible . . . to document the ways in which women were excluded from the most prestigious areas of religious praxis. (2006, 7).[3]

In spite of the effects of world religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam—in the inclusion of women, Andaya concedes that "for the most part, Islamic expansion in Southeast Asia underwrites a narrative of amicable localization rather than abrupt change and dislocation" (ibid). She supports her contentions by drawing from the work of Karim (a scholar of Malay culture), who "maintains that pre-Islamic customs or *adat* regularly redefined and reaffirmed women's social contributions after the Muslim arrival, allowing a strong role in communal life to persist despite the new privileges men enjoyed" (Karim, quoted in Andaya 2006, 89). In my own experience this claim is underscored by any number of rituals and ideas in the region that fold (newer) Islamic practice into (older) local praxis whether or not they have anything to do with women. In other words the same processes that were identified in the Introduction of this volume in relation to the performing arts and expressive culture, wherein Islamic ideology and practice were adapted, localized, and, if you will, Indonesianized, may also extend to women.

In the course of my field research in Indonesia, I became curious about motivation.[4] Especially as a non-Muslim, I could not help but wonder what, for example, inspires young women to pursue Quranic studies? How and why do they become professional reciters, *qariah*, of the Qur'an? How does an Islamic education prepare women for life in the modern and supposedly globalized world? How does Islamic life and work offer women professional and personal avenues of empowerment? What other options might or might not be open to this community? I was also confronted with questions of permissibility and space. Having repeatedly read of the separation of women and men in Islamic contexts and of the controversial nature of a women's physical body in the public space, I tried to determine when in my own ethnographic experience men and women were comfortable together as colleagues and partners. I also had to follow the lead of my female friends and colleagues in determining when to self-segregate and when and why our presence was objectionable. Throughout my ethnographic work and when I brought the field home with me in the various stages of writing up, I grappled with an overarching question: Was women's activism in Islamic contexts something new or old?

Tradition and Modernity in Muslim Indonesia

Tradition and modernity are key terms in academic and popular discourse, particularly when it involves women. These terms must be flagged for special consideration in the Indonesian context, however, as they refer to specific historical streams and significant religious communities that are largely unknown outside the country, even to Muslims and scholars of Islam. Modernists, usually affiliated with the group Muhammadiyah, are people who believe in getting back to the basics of religion, largely through the process of *tajdid or ijtihad*: new readings of classic texts. The organization Muhammadiyah was, in fact, established in 1912 by Ahmad Dahlan, who was inspired by Muhammad Abdu of Egypt, with a rationale that the practice of Islam in Indonesia, and particularly in Java, was syncretic, heretical, and rife with mysticism.[5] The process of *ijtihad* or reading classic texts through a modern lens is one that has obvious appeal for feminist scholars searching for the gateway to liberation. Yet, in the view of many Indonesians, the modernist, stripped-down version of Islam goes too far in the direction of sterilization, lobotomizing the cultural personality of Indonesian Islam.

In contrast to Muhammadiyah is the organization Nahdlatul Ulama, or NU (literally the awakening of Islamic scholars), the largest Muslim organization in the country. Followers of NU are known to be more tolerant and proud of local cultural practices, while still ready to embrace the modern, multinational, and Muslim world. Although I did not realize this at the outset of my research (1996), the variation

between these two local worldviews is, in one way, a distillation of the issues at the heart of my larger study. The two leaders, Amien Rais of Muhammadiyah and Abdurrahman Wahid of NU, were both presidential candidates during my Fulbright year in Indonesia (1999); one of them, Wahid, became president, who was succeeded by his vice president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, a woman, in July 2001.

Figure 3.2. Logo of Muhammadiyah.

Figure 3.3. Logo of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

The ideology of both organizations has had implications that reach beyond their membership. Stemming from NU, Indonesia's traditionalist Muslims, are some of Indonesia's most liberal Muslim intellectuals and activists and, while members of Muhammadiyah are hardly radical in their views, the method of getting back to basics has been embraced by Islamist groups, characterized alternately as conservative, extremist, fundamentalist, or fanatic. These groups have multiplied following the power vacuum left behind in the wake of Suharto's fall in 1998. This multiplication was partially inspired by the climate of anti-Occidentalism that was thrust into orbit after September 2001 and that has accelerated with America's ongoing war on terror.

Practices that endure in traditional Indonesian Islam, and that are often part of the collective culture of adherents of NU, include: the veneration of saints and teachers; the visitation of graves; the preparation of offerings; rituals of sharing such as the *slametan* meal; the repetition of Quranic verses for healing and prayer; collective chanting and song; rituals surrounding birth, death, and times of transition; identification with the *wali sanga*, the nine saints who transmitted Islam in Indonesia; and, at least partially, the acknowledgement of or the participation in a mystical approach to Islam, *tasawwuf*, that ranges from poetic expression in song to organized Sufism. I should caution here that this list constitutes a repertoire of customs, many of them considered pre-Islamic and rooted in traditional, mystical Javanese Kejawen, that may be acknowledged and accepted among the NU community as ideology but not practiced regularly or experienced only occasionally on visits to ancestral homelands, or through popular culture and art.

NU culture, knowledge, and authority are located in the institution of the *pondok pesantren* (s. and pl.; the term derives from the Arabic *funduq*, hotel, and the Javanese term, *santri,* pious Muslim), where millions of Indonesian boys and girls are educated to become, among other things, specialists in religious knowledge. Heavily clustered in Java, *pondok pesantren* are found throughout the archipelago and, in addition to teaching rural youth basic skills, like how to read, they help to prepare students for advanced learning in the 14 National Islamic Colleges and Universities (UIN, *Universitas Islam Negri*) or privately run institutions like *Insitut Ilmu al-Qur'an* (IIQ), the Institute for the Study of the Qur'an, a women's college where I studied and taught in Jakarta.

For women, both organizations, since their inception, have promoted learning and interpreting religious texts. Doorn-Harder writes:

> While most Indonesians recognize that the women of Muhammadiyah and NU undertake all types of social, educational, and medical activities, the fact that many of them are also involved in rereading the holy texts

> of Islam has been largely overlooked. Especially since the 1990s this has become a formative activity for women who graduate from *pesantren* or Islamic Universities. When we try to find comparable activities in the Muslim world, we cannot simply look at women in other countries doing similar exercises. (2006, 8)

According to Doorn-Harder, Indonesia's Islamic feminism was never confined to the upper classes nor was it expressed only in the terms of Western discourse. "Hence," she writes, "(whereas) feminists in the Middle East are accused of being western agents, Indonesian activists seldom hear such complaints" (Ibid. 40–41). Doorn-Harder's comparison to women's actions in Egypt underscores the need I identify in stressing the complexity and particularity of women throughout the Muslim world. In Egypt, for example, as Saba Mahmood's study of 2005 indicates, where women explain and interpret texts among themselves, "reinterpretation involves challenging the traditional, hierarchical, institutions, and predominantly male religious power structures, a task which women in general are not encouraged to do" (Doorn-Harder 2006, 40–41).

The mapping of these categories, namely tradition and modernity, onto domains of women's activism is enlightening. Here I take into consideration the activism of Quranic reciters, other professionals, housewives, teenagers, and girls, all of them involved in some way or another in Islamic musical arts. Although I concur with feminist scholars such as Suzanne Brenner (1995), Mina Mooallem (1999), and Saba Mahmood (2005) in their assertion that women's Islamic activism in both the private domain and the public sphere are "modern," my particular ethnography reveals that the presence of active Muslim women are part and parcel of local, "traditionalist" practice. The exclusion of women due to ideas about inferiority or the inappropriateness of their physical bodies in the public space and soundscape was, in the course of my fieldwork, more often the result of newer, imported, and invented "modernist" ideas. On first reading, this may be confusing because we tend to associate active women with modern societies and passive women as traditional. In the situation I describe, however, it is more often the traditional camp that is tolerant, moderate, and more likely to lean toward egalitarianism, particularly in regard to public works and public performance.

Text, Voice, and Body: On Public Work and Performance

I delineate three areas where women's performance and public works frame and reflect traditionalist, womanist Islam, as well as areas where the public presence of women is under modern scrutiny and censorship. The first arena, and the one

that is the most common among women, involves social work for and by "regular" community members and "extraordinary activists." The second arena, in which many community organizers, along with amateur and professional reciters are involved, is that of Islamic music, a topic of several of my recent papers and publications (Rasmussen 2001, 2005, 2009, 2010a, 2010b). The third arena, which is the most specialized and prestigious, concerns the access to and presentation and interpretation of the holiest text of Islam, the Qur'an. I consider these arenas of women's activities in order: social work, Islamic performance, and Quranic recitation.

Organized women's groups called *maejlis taklim* constitute a religious and social infrastructure throughout the country. *Maejlis* refers to a council or gathering and is a direct translation into Indonesian from the Arabic term that derives from the word "to sit," *jalasa*; *taklim*, also an Arabic cognate, refers to knowledge.

Figure 3.4. Faizah Haris, a solo singer, performs gambus music with her band of male musicians at the end of the gathering (Badan Kontak) of hundreds of women's organizations (Maesjlis Talkim) from all over the archipelago at the Jakarta Senayan Stadium in February, 1999. On stage with her are another singer and an event official. The event featured speeches by then-President B.J. Habibie, the head of the Menteri Wanita (the Ministry for Women) Tutti Alawiyyah, and numerous other performances ranging from marching bands, to choreographed pageantry modeled after self- defense arts (*pencak silat*), the singing of *tawashih* and *sholawat* (Islamic, Arabic-language songs), and Quranic recitation performed solo and in male and female quartets. Faizah Haris and her gambus group were the finale of the day's events. (photo by author)

The collective power of women to organize in order to protect first, the family, but also the elderly, the sick, and the orphaned, could never be interpreted as a modus operandi imported from Western feminism. Women's organizations and their mission are long standing and from the grass roots. In addition to their social works, women study. Under the guidance of a female leader, usually a trained reciter or religious specialist, women learn how to read and recite the Qur'an in Arabic, how to perfect their recitation—a life-long practice for most Muslims—and they engage in the interpretation of the holy texts through a discussion of religious and social issues. Thus, in addition to their mission to help the needy, *maejlis taklim* groups also constitute a context where women pursue the introduction and exchange of knowledge.

Musical performance, the second arena I delineate, is another area of "womanist" Islam involving girls, teenagers, and women who participate in a range of communal and commercial musical genres, for example from Indonesian *qasidah moderen* to Arab-derived *gambus* music to the singing of *sholawat* and *tawashshih* songs in praise of the prophet (see Rasmussen 2005; see also Berg and Harnish, this volume, and Capwell 1995). Although Islamic song and the many genres of what is referred to as *seni musik Islam* or Islamic Musical Arts feature prominently in my research, they are not, specifically, the focus of this chapter. That being said, it is important to emphasize that singing is, more often than not, a component of social and ritual gatherings where the performance of Islamic liturgical texts also occurs. Thus, girls and women who study the Qur'an and its recitation will also sing religious songs in Indonesian and Arabic, will participate in organized and rehearsed music-making for rituals, competitions, and festivals, and will witness or consume via mass media the Islamic music performances of their peers and well-known professional artists or ensembles. Islamic music, then, is integral to Islamic ritual and social contexts, and this is one of the most important particularities of Indonesian Islamic practice (Rasmussen 2005 and 2010a).

The third arena I identify involves the access to religious texts. Most of the female reciters I came to know and most of the events—local, regional, national, and international—to which I was invited emanated from teachers and students at IIQ (*Insitut Ilmu al-Qur'an*, The Institute for the Study of the Qur'an), where I attended classes and taught, and where I learned about the culture of Quranic recitation in Indonesia. Located right across the street from the National Islamic University, Syarif Hidayatullah, in Ciputat, South Jakarta, the women's college IIQ was founded in 1977 by Kiyai Haji Ibrahim Hosen, who, like many Islamic scholars, did the core of his training in Cairo, Egypt, at Al-Azhar University, the premier university of Islamic learning in the world. IIQ, as it is called in Jakarta, is modeled after a similar institute for young men also founded by Hosen in 1971, the PTIQ (*Perguruan Tinnggi Ilmu al-Qur'ân*, High Institute for the Science

Figure 3.5. Girls preparing for their performance at a children's religious festival in Jakarta, 1999. (photo by author)

[study] of the Qur'ân). IIQ trains hundreds of young women in Quranic studies including *tajwid* (the system which codifies the divine language and accent of Quranic recitation in terms of rhythm, timbre, the sectioning of the text, enunciation, and phonetics) *tafsir* (commentary and interpretation), Arabic, *Shari'a* (Islamic law and jurisprudence), and *nagham* (the melodic aspects of Quranic recitation). Students at IIQ also take regular university courses such as psychology, *Pancasila* (Indonesian civics), and English. IIQ combines university curriculum with the teaching and lifestyle of the *pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding school); young women live in an *asrama* or dormitory where extracurricular activities surrounding Quranic studies may occur, for example, memorization classes, and where holidays, like *Eid al-Adha*, are celebrated.

When among women (including girls and teenagers) involved in the perfection of Quranic recitation and knowledge, I confronted the stereotypical (mis)understanding that this was a male activity from which women are excluded. The women and men I worked with taught me that as Quranic scholars, particularly those who serve as reciters, women are neither shameful nor defective, and their voices and public bodies, as they work to broadcast and strengthen the faith, represent neither temptation nor danger. For most Indonesian Muslims, it seems, the woman's voice and the woman's body is not "'*awra*" (shameful, from the Arabic), but rather "*biasa saja*" (just regular, usual,

from the Indonesian). The people I came to know willingly and proudly differentiated their culture from what they *thought* went on in the Arab world. The orientation toward the female body was just one topic of comparison.

Maria Ulfah, the main consultant for this project, explained it to me this way one day:

> According to the Arab opinion—if they hear the women's voice it brings them to sexual desires. It makes them happy. This is different than us. The story of Umm Kulthum is this. She wanted to become a reciter but because she was a woman it was prohibited so she became a singer. Even in Mecca, if women are with men they wear the *hijab* and if they speak they have to use a big voice like a man. The voice of a woman is forbidden.

Maria Ulfah's story provides a rationale for the unproblematic presence of the woman's voice in Indonesia through a quasi-biographical, quasi-fictionalized anecdote from the life of Umm Kulthum, the legendary female singer from Egypt (1904–1975), whose music is known, literally, throughout the Muslim world. It is legend, also, that Umm Kulthum learned to recite the Qur'an when a small child and that many attributed her unparalleled vocal artistry to her mastery of *tajwid* and the Arabic modal system, the *maqamat*. To my knowledge, there is no evidence that Umm Kulthum originally wanted to be a professional reciter, so this may be part of the story that is conjecture. The statement that a woman's voice brings an Arab man to "sexual desires" may be interpreted as both the confirmation of a stereotype (one of many) about Arabs in Indonesia, and also a frank explanation of what the concept *'awra*, or at least one aspect of it, really means, that women are identified first and foremost, at least in the context described above, as sexual.[6]

I would like to describe just a bit of Maria Ulfah's world. In one setting, Maria Ulfah was the final presenter at an all-women's celebration for the birthday of the prophet Muhammad, a common occurrence in Jakarta and throughout the Muslim world. Called *Maulid in-Nabi*, the event occurred on August 12, 2003, at the home of Nur Asia Amin, in Tanggerang, in the greater Jakarta area JABOTABEK (Jakarta, Bogor, Tanggerang, Bekasi). The event actually took place in the street, which was cordoned off, carpeted, and covered by a series of canvas tent roofs. A rented sound system with two technicians assured that the event would be heard well beyond the perimeter of the house and alleyway. Somewhere between 200–300 women, as well as some men, were in attendance. Toward the end of the program, Maria Ulfah was invited to recite. When it was her turn, she climbed the stairs of the stage and sat down on the floor, her legs tucked under herself and out to the side. She was handsomely clad in a light

purple, floor-length dress with matching headscarf (*jilbab*) complemented by a longer dark purple tunic. She wore, as she usually does, make-up, including lipstick, blush, and eye shadow.

As a prelude to her recitation, she educated her audience, pleasantly, and with a smile on her face, but in a completely authoritative manner for 10 minutes.

> "…I am going to demonstrate various styles of reading from the seven styles….You women have already heard all of these styles of reading but I will recite for you in all of these styles and you can hear them again now. The *hadith* says—(and she repeated in Arabic)—'The Qur'an came down in seven dialects,' so you have to choose the one that suits you. After the angel Gabriel came to Muhammad, the Prophet was then required to teach the Qur'an to his companions (*sahabat*) in a precise way so that there was no alteration (to the word of God). This was part of his mission of *dakwa*. But it turned out that it wasn't that easy, so at his next meeting with the Angel Gabriel, Muhammad said:

And here Ibu Maria actually impersonated the voice of the Prophet:

> "*Angel, it turns out that in my community, what I mean is that among my companions here, there are some that can and some that can't (recite). Could you add some more models for reciting?*"[7]

And then she continued, adopting her didactic persona once again.

> "So even though the Prophet received divine revelation (*wahyu*), his companions, or his community couldn't imitate him perfectly. With the permission of God, the Angel added ways of reading, up to seven ways.… If you are just reciting with your *maejlis taklim*, perhaps you have not been exposed to the seven styles. They are very difficult to learn but you should be aware of this system (science/*ilmu*). Now if you have sons and daughters who would like to study they should know."
>
> "You will hear now hear the calmness and with blessings the holy verses of the Qur'an."

Following this 10-minute introduction, Maria Ulfah presented a recitation lasting 24 minutes.[8] Just the length of her performance confirms that she is a superstar in world of Quranic reciters. The recitation she performed covered a range of nearly three octaves that began around the Db below middle C and extended to higher phrases hovering around a Db, two octaves above middle C.

Although phrases were not extraordinarily long—the average phrase was 20–25 seconds in duration—the entire recitation was produced in chest voice with no falsetto timbre, and featured florid melisma and ornamentation throughout. Typical of the standard recitations by accomplished reciters in Indonesia, she progressed through a number of Arabic musical modes in Egyptian-style rendition, each with several characteristic sub-phrases: *Maqam Bayyati, Maqam Saba, Maqam Ajam, Maqam Hijaz, Maqam Sikah, Maqam Nahawand, Maqam Rast,* and back to *Maqam Bayyati* (See Rasmussen 2001 and 2010a). Although Indonesian audiences are not known for silence, even for recitation of the Qur'an, at this event and many others that I attended where she was a featured (and paid) reciter, Maria Ulfah commanded a captive audience.

The Gendered Voice

Research at the crossroads of music and gender collectively suggests that in many contexts women and men perform different repertoires in different styles and for different reasons and functions. In some cases, women's performance is less virtuosic and more modest than that of men; women's music can be smaller in range and feature less dynamic variation, dramatic emotionality, and elaborate ornamentation; women are more often supporting musicians than featured soloists; and if a tradition features vocalists and instrumentalists, women are more likely to sing (see Koskoff, Sugarman, Magrini, ed).[9] I argue here that in this case these distinctions are irrelevant. For a professional reciter like Maria Ulfah, there is no choice of repertoire. She performs the same repertoire as a man would with the same technique and style. She has to be virtuosic; there is no place for the shy, coy, Javanese female here. The *ambitus* or range of her performance can stretch two and a half octaves easily; her ornamentations may encompass extraordinary filigree; and her interpretation must be sincere. Unlike her feminine demeanor in a Javanese context where her voice is high and soft, this reciter's voice can be low, medium, high, loud and even harsh without risking being heard as *kasar* (rough, course, or crude) as the Qur'an is unequivocally *halus* (refined).[10]

The Presence of Women: The Body

The reciter (male or female) channels an archetypal recitation. Yet, we know from coaching sessions and the explicit testimony of reciters that talent and the individual character of the individual reciter's voice are crucial to beautiful, successful recitation (Rasmussen 2010b). To further emphasize the point, even

though the reciter is representing a sound that emanates from a divine source and is completely disembodied from the mundane, human world, the physical and aesthetic artistry of the recitation are both humanly produced and by the body. How could a reciter's voice possibly be without gender when the voice is inextricably "part of the body, produced by body parts" (Olwage, 2004, 206). Olwage, in his study of the "Social History of Vocal Timbre," reminds us:

> As a part of the body, the voice stands for the subject more directly than any other instrument. Indeed, so tied to the body is the voice that even when disembodied we easily identify it as belonging to a particular subject, whether individual or social. (2004, 206)[11]

No matter how much a manifestation of the divine, the recited Qur'an is humanly produced by a body (with both sex and gender) that has rehearsed, often for years, at very specific tasks in very public ways.

The physical segregation of men and women often occurs in formal social and religious gatherings. I was never able to elicit rules ("men must sit here and women over there"), and I often circulated freely between both sides of a room, but when such voluntary segregation occurred, people seemed to amicably be following some sort of previously-agreed-upon code of behavior. Yet, it was also clear from formal social gatherings, official ceremonies and competitions, and working situations, like classes, that the sound of a woman's voice or her physical presence was not problematic in the Muslim Indonesian context. From the scenario described above, it is clear that it is precisely because of her voice (and her body), and not in spite of it, that Maria Ulfah is an exemplar of her religion. Through modeling an ideal person, one who has knowledge about the religion and the ability to access the divine through reciting the Qur'an, Maria Ulfah demonstrates and encourages a sort of transformation of self. She moves from participant to presenter, and from teacher to ritual specialist. Her advice to the women at the gathering is not about morality or how to act in particular situations or even about male-female relations, the latter topic being common among teachers and female religious preachers (*da'i*).[12] Rather, she conveys knowledge about the Qur'an itself, empowering women with information, and, I would add, her commanding presence. As she recites and as the women listen and hum the final note of each of her phrases, Maria Ulfah channels the very word of God in language that is thought to be so beautiful that its divine creation is unquestioned. Internalizing these words with the breath and on the lips and with the powerful vocal production required of the *mujawwad* style, is, without doubt, a profound and powerful way of achieving unity or oneness with the divine; this is also part of this reciter's transformation of self that is both witnessed and experienced by her public.

How does the portrait I paint of Maria Ulfah as competent, commanding, authoritative, accepted, and respected compare to other women in Indonesia? How does it compare to Muslim women in the Arab world and throughout the Islamic *umma*? As a scholar, I perceived a Muslim sisterhood that was represented in scholarly discourse. I then attempted to put the Indonesian women I know into this cross-cultural matrix, taking into account my own position and those of my Western feminist siblings who, it has been cautioned, yearn for the progressive liberation of the Third World woman. Finding a Muslim sisterhood, however, is an approach that is flawed. To try to essentialize and capture (in writing) even the smallest community is, as anthropologist Abu-Lughod observes, to traffic in generalizations (Abu-Lughod 2008, 7), ". . . to use details and the particulars of individual lives to produce typifications" (ibid). Having established such typifications, I would continue, we can draw lines between groups such as I have done between the two large Muslim organizations NU and Muhammadiyah, or between Indonesian women and women elsewhere in the world. But, I suggest we resist the temptation of typology and taxonomy that characterizes our disciplines and entertain more complex and much less conclusive explanations.

Maria Ulfah, her students, her friends in *pondok pesantren*, and her colleagues who organize the network of recitation contests that occur from the village to the international level are predominantly, although not exclusively, from the culture of NU. Yet, while most of the people with whom I worked willingly self-identify with one group or another, adherents of Muhammadiyah and NU can coexist within the same social organization, even within the same family, just as Democrats, Republicans, and libertarians coexist within my own extended family. Thus, although not by any means the norm, any particular Indonesian family could include adherents of both organizations, Muhammadiyah and NU. Doorn-Harder, in addition, remarks that recently "the two modes have come to borrow each other's methods" (2006, 11). If such ideological coexistence can occur among people, even those in the same family, it is logical that coexisting ideologies and practices might also occur within an individual. Evidently so, because the young women and men who are born into NU families and communities and who might aspire to emulate Maria Ulfah's exquisite recitation and distinguished career may also listen to the extremely popular all-boy *nasyid* groups, whose young male members have explained to me categorically that women are excluded because their voices are '*awra* (shameful) (Rasmussen 2005 and 2010a). In trying to make sense, comparatively, of the thoughts and actions of individuals and groups so that we can move toward generalizations, it might be prudent to reflect upon the words of John Bowen, scholar of Islam in Indonesia, who writes in his own explanation of the "multiple intentions" of people who simultaneously walk in worlds that are at the same time modernist and traditionalist:

> It is especially incumbent upon those of us who write about current Others to stress their particularity of ideas, their complexity of motives, and their general humanity. (1997, 178)[13]

Concluding Remarks

Contemporary scholars of Islam in Indonesia are proactively addressing the colonialist project to underrate the legitimacy of Islam in the Malay world. Hefner points to the work of Wiliam Roff (1985, 7), who writes:

> …there seems to have been an extraordinary desire on the part of Western social science observers to diminish, conceptually, the place and role of the religion and culture of Islam in Southeast Asian societies.

Due to the Islamic intensification that has blossomed in the last two to three decades of the 20th century, scholars who have turned their attention to Muslim Indonesia have realized the way in which in Southeast Asia has occupied a precarious position at the "intellectual periphery of the Islamic world" (Hefner 2003, 7).[14] The differences between modernists and traditionalists underscore certain tensions regarding the acceptance or rejection of localized and deeply ingrained Islamic practice. Of course there are numerous populations within Indonesia, and particularly among artists and intellectuals, for whom this debate is largely or completely irrelevant. Yet for those who are engaged personally, socially, or professionally in Islamic culture, asserting the legitimacy of Southeast Asian Islam is an exercise that faces at least three obstacles: 1) the practice of Dutch colonial administrators who overlooked Islamic contributions and influences in favor of pre- and non-Islamic layers of culture; 2) Middle Eastern ignorance of the region and its history; and 3) a canon of scholarship that presumes Islamic thought and practice in Indonesia (as well as in other places outside of the Arab Middle East) as derivative or merely a "thin veneer" (Hefner 1997, 11; see also Madjid 1996).

While projects of modernism, particularly those with a nationalist bent, might seem at first glance to emancipate women, religious reform in the Indonesian context can have the opposite effect, creating new ways for patriarchal ideas and structures, all of them rationalized by religious authorities, to overshadow local cultural practice. Post-independence Islamic intensification, whether a process of "resurgence," as Ong would describe it in the case of Malaysia (Ong 1995), or "discovery," as Brenner would argue for Indonesia (Brenner 1995), has often

dismissed long-established local practice, trumping it with new, often imported or even invented ideas supposedly originating from the framework the authoritative Arab Islamic world.

Yet, resistance to some sort of universal model of global Islam is assured, I submit, by practices that are engraved in tradition. I offer this final scenario from my experience as an example of such traditional practice. Megawati Sukarnoputri, the female president of Indonesia during the time described in this chapter, demonstrated confident resistance to world Islam and to the distinguished guests from the Middle East and Arab world in her speech at the opening ceremonies of the first-ever International Competition in Quranic Recitation held in December 2003. She appeared without head covering at all, not even a *krudung*, the light scarf that is draped ceremonially but that always reveals some part of a nice coiffure, and something that Megawati usually donned for any number of ceremonial occasions. This was a move that astonished the competition officials who proactively went out of their way to modify women's participation in the competition, so as not to offend Arab guests.

The president began by explaining the special tradition called *halal bi halal* that follows the month of Ramadan and continued with several comments about "the attributes of tolerance in the adaptation of local culture." She concluded her speech:

> "It is the mixture between the quality of peace, the test of brotherhood, and the aspect of tolerance with the local culture that is unique to Muslim Indonesia."

Whether interpreted as a mode of resistance to colonialism, nationalism, or the modern West, women's actions on the Islamic front are both seen and heard. The voices of women are one of the distinctive strains in the Islamic soundscape and, as they perform, teach, study together, and practice alone, women contribute to the creation of messages of great beauty, power, and potency. They not only have access to the divine, they are empowered to understand and interpret its authoritative texts for themselves and for others.

Notes

1. Portions of this chapter derive from my book; please see Rasmussen 2010a for a more comprehensive account of this material.

2. In making these claims Ramusack references works by Andaya 1994 and Van Esterik 1982: Andaya, Barbara Watson. 1994. The Changing Religious Role of women in

Pre-Modern South East Asia. *South East Asia Research* 2, no. 2 (September: 99-1116; and Van Esterik, Penny, ed. *Women of Southeast Asia.* Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Monograph Series on Southeast Asia, Occasional Paper no. 9. De Kalb: Northern Illinois University.

3. I have reversed the original order of the first two of Andaya's statements.

4. Anna M. Gade devotes a chapter of her book *Perfection Makes Practice: Learning, Emotion, and the Recited Qur'an in Indonesia* (2004), to issues of motivation.

5. Renowned anthropologist Clifford Geertz, whose book *Religion of Java* (1959) is widely read in Indonesia, has been criticized for presenting modernist Islam as normative in contrast to traditional religious practices present in the archipelago for centuries.

6. The term *'awra*, generally translated as "shameful," is complex and multivalent. Shame derives, for both women and men from their genitals (both their function—procreation—and what they make or allow people do), but the term can also mean defective, deficient, and these meanings apply primarily to women's bodies, women's voices, and women (see Ahmed 1992).

7. In Bahasa Indonesia her speech—this passage impersonating the voice of the prophet—is transcribed: "*Malika, ternyata ummat saya ini, apa itu, para yang sahabat ini, ada yang bisa, ada yang ngak. Apa bisa tambah lagi model lagi untuk bacaanya?"*

8. Although I am not able to recognize all seven dialects or styles of reading, I could hear that Maria was repeating some of the material with variations in *tajwid*. She assured me later that she had demonstrated all seven styles of reading.

9. While generalities might be made about women's approach to and style of performance, it is important to note how gender is performed differently in various cultures and in various times. For example, in Sugarman's fine ethnography (1997), she describes the emotionality that is charactaristic of male singers, a quality which, in the West, I believe is associated more with women than with men.

10. *Kasar* (rough, crude) and *halus* are oppositional aesthetics in Javanese culture, which most observe has an extraordinary etiquette of politeness and hierarchy. For women, this includes everything from how to stand, sit, and speak, to what kind of register, timbre, and volume to use when speaking. Issues of vocal tessitura and volume are central to gendered social behavior. Deborah Wong mentions her success in gaining access to social situations when she raised the pitch of her speaking voice in Thailand (2001), and I experienced the same thing in France when I lived there for the first time at the age of 19. What I want to emphasize here is that the female reciter can be very loud across her entire vocal range and never risk being crude. See Brenner's article "Why Women Rule the Roost: Rethinking Javanese Ideologies of Gender and Self-Control" (1995), where she explores notions of prestige, autonomy, and power among men and women.

11. Olwage's scholarship, which brings into focus the ways in which the voice is an index of class in the context of Victorian Britain and of race in pre- and post-apartheid South Africa, is useful for understanding the reception of the recited Qur'an in context.

12. Indeed, in Indonesia as in Egypt, some women are known as *da'i* or preachers. See Saba Mahmood's excellent work on Egyptian preachers and their female communities (2005).

13. Bowen continues: "And herein lies a possible contribution of comparative studies, even studies of small and far-off places, to social life. It only makes sense if there is some relationship between social science writing and political acting, if the more particularity that bleeds through portraits of current political Others, the greater the humanity that will surface in foreign (or domestic) politics. This hope may be naïve, but it has the advantage of being hope" (1997, 178).

14. Ulil Abdallah, founder of the progressive organization *Jaringan Islam Liberal* (The Liberal Muslim Network), expressed to me his disappointment at Muslim co-religionists in the Middle East and Arab world who are barely aware of Muslim Southeast Asia (both geographically and culturally).

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4

Brai in Performance: Religious Ecstasy and Art in Java

Matthew Isaac Cohen

Matthew Cohen's essay looks at Javanese, Indonesian, and European representations of brai. Brai *is both an oral art in which Arabic devotional texts are glossed in Javanese, as well as a devotional practice in which participants experience rapture. Historically and in contemporary times,* brai *is performed for private and public events by groups of male and female mystics who sing in Arabic and Javanese, accompanying themselves with spirited clapping and percussion. The term* brai *or* birahi *is Javanese for "passion."* Brai *was a widespread practice in 19th-century Java and colonial ethnography indicates that village groups formed a complex social network. But the practice has declined radically with the rise of modernist Islam and it is represented by only a handful of groups around the northern Javanese city of Cirebon and neighboring areas of coastal Java, which function largely without awareness of one another. Cohen's chapter explains that although non-devotees have both romanticized and demonized* brai, *its practices and beliefs are, actually, little known to outsiders, who tend to see* brai *practitioners as cultists or folk artists. Rarely have they been seen as mystics whose public singing, clapping, and drumming forms constitute only one element of a religious practice that has much in common with Sufism in other parts of the Islamic world. Drawing on historical accounts of* brai *from the early 19th-century as well as on participant-observation research on the Nurul Iman group of the village of Bayalangu, Cohen presents a convincing case of misreading and misrepresentation that has contributed to the current identity of* brai *as "village or regional, rural arts,"* kesenian daerah. *Cohen's work takes its place along side that of Kartomi, Harnish, Pätzold, and others in describing the ways in which Indonesian Islamic performance is reauthenticated to fit cultural, moral, and aesthetic categories.*

Modern expressive culture is ordered analytically by a core dichotomy. A performance event or piece of art is either public (and thus open to criticism

and contemplation by all and sundry), or private—a rehearsal, a sketch, a work-in-progress, a moment of private contemplation, a dirty joke shared *entre nous*. Boundary crossing is momentous. We experience acute embarrassment when we overhear someone singing a ditty to himself, or alternately a sense of enormous privilege when we catch a glimpse into the unmediated expression of a major artist through her working notes or diaries. The divide between public and private expression has narrowed somewhat in recent years through open rehearsals, public master classes, and presentations of works-in-progress, as well as performance art—which often intentionally confuses private and public spheres.

Islamic cultures, particularly forms of mystical Islam often glossed as Sufi, contain many expressive genres that skirt the public-private boundary, calling the ideological divisions between public and private into question. Music and dance operate as paths to divine unity and expression of belief. Practitioners of mystical Islam have not shied from performing before mixed audiences. The doctrine might be esoteric, but not generally the practice. Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882–1927), the doyen of European Sufism, supported himself in Europe as a classical Indian musician. The devotion expressed in his musical concerts, as much as the insight of his public lectures, attracted numerous followers. Inayat Khan saw his concertizing as absolutely unproblematic, indeed integral to his Sufi practice and belief. The reception of mystical performance in multicultural societies, however, causes some consternation. Richard Schechner (1988) provides the example of one such conundrum brought on by a performance of whirling dervishes from Turkey at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) in New York in 1972. The program to this production requested that the audience refrain from applause out of respect for the sanctity of the ceremony. Schechner comments:

> The BAM audience had to be told that what they paid money to see as an entertainment retained enough of its ritual basis to require a change in conventional theatrical behaviour. Or was BAM's announcement a P.T. Barnum ploy? Telling the audience why they were not able to applaud was signaling the importance and rarity of what they were about to see. The fact that "dervishes" is an imposed but recognizable name, not what the dancers call themselves, provides part of the answer (Schechner 1988, 137).

I would suggest that the question for which Schechner eagerly seeks an answer is whether he was witnessing an authentic, private rite or a theatrical interpretation of a rite. But, to the mystics themselves, such an analytical

distinction is likely to be nonsensical. The only moment of true authenticity for a mystic comes from the union of the self and God. If a public entertainment successfully facilitates divine union, then this is as valid a form of expression as private meditation. This essay surveys the reception in Java over the last two centuries of a genre of mystical music known as *brai* to examine whether Java, with its history of syncretism and religious tolerance, offers new possibilities for overcoming the private-public divide.[1] *Brai* manifests the divine "at the limits of art," exposing what French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy calls "the areality of an ecstasy" (Nancy 1991, 127, 20). It is a practice which defines an "inoperative community" and "the impossibility either of an individuality, in the precise sense of the term, or a pure collective totality" (*ibid*, 6). In my discussion of literary and anthropological texts concerning *brai* and my own ethnographic observations of *brai* in the Cirebon area, I aim to show how *brai* performances, which are simultaneously private expressions of faith and public entertainments, challenge and trouble religious, aesthetic, and ethical absolutes held by Javanese, Dutch, and Indonesian observers and commentators, who are all "bound together in their denial of ecstasy" (*ibid*, 6). *Brai* presents an alternative to the dominant political order, a space for what Nancy calls "being-in-common."

The Concept of *Birahi*

The word *brai* and its variants (*birahi*, *brahi*, *berahi*) in everyday Javanese and Malay means "to feel passionate," "attracted," or "be keen about." The word usually denotes sexual love, although in Malay it can also refer to "feelings excited by music." Wilkinson (1959, 128), in his Malay-English dictionary, gives the example from the *Hang Tuah* of inebriated party guests who are so moved by good singing as to be "stirred by it to get up and dance" (*berahi pun berbangkit menari*). This sense of excitement caused by music is key to the performance of *brai*.

But, there is a particular set of meanings that the word *brai* takes on in the devotional poetry of Javanese mysticism (*suluk*): It refers to the special relation between man and God that is permeated by love. As Zoetmulder (1994, 83) explains, "God is lover and simultaneously the loved one, and this from eternity, so that love was never potentially present without the act of loving." We know the radiance of God's glory through a two-way flow of love, and love for and by God allows us to know His will. If God and Man are likened to puppeteer (*dhalang*) and shadow puppet (*wayang*), they come into relation upon the screen (*kelir*) that takes the form of *birahi* (*wujud birahi*) (Zoetmulder 1994).

An emphasis on divine love is present in the admonitions of Seh Bari, an exposition of mystical literature (*usul suluk*) by a teacher of Islam to his disciples in dialogue form. This is one of the earliest surviving works of Javanese Islam, a manuscript brought to The Netherlands from coastal Java at the end of the 16th century. It is believed to be a posthumous account of the teachings of Seh Bari, possibly a hermit and mystic associated with Karang (in Pandegelang, Banten).[2] Seh Bari preaches a monistic doctrine in which the believer is united with God through love. Love is an active quality of God. The disciple is told to offer himself in love to God, and to understand that Islamic saints are exemplary to the degree "they are overpowered, replaced and blotted out by the all-pervading love of the Being who imparts being. It is constantly the eternal Lord who praises Himself, and this by means of the acceptance by the tongue of his beloved. Man's tongue only reproduces, for man's worship and praise are not his own" (Drewes 1969, 93).

This doctrinal obliteration of self in love for the divine, associated elsewhere in the Islamic world with 10th-century Persian mystic al-Hallaj, is a commonplace of Javanese mystical poetry (*suluk*). In the poem *Yen Kapanggi* (Were You to Encounter) inscribed in early 19th-century Cirebon though possibly composed in the 17th century, the devotee is figured as a Sorrowful Lady (*Hyang Rundawati*) whose yearning for Divine Union overpowers her entirely. "The Sorrowful Lady is drunk with passion [*birahi*]/stone-dead drunk/drunk beyond awareness of self/languishing with love/unceasing love, begging for union with the Lord/offering soul and body/pierced to the soul's core/yearning for unity" (Simuh et al. 1987, 284f).[3] The *suluk* goes on to explain that all divisions (including differences between men and women, past and present) are illusory, and that even the self should rightly be considered as only a means to envisage God. One should not aspire to become a prophet or saint. Rather one's sole aim should be to achieve unity with God. *Suluk* poetry of this sort was intended to be sung, often with the accompaniment of *terbang* (frame drums), in intimate gatherings of mystics as a guide to being in the world.

Brai in Javanese Literature

Sumarsam (1995, 36–38) demonstrates that in 19th-century Java, and probably for some centuries earlier, practitioners of a form of Sufism performed ecstatic, whirling dances accompanied by percussion and singing. Performances involved both men and women going into trance. Practitioners were known as followers of *agama Dul* (the Dul religion), *santri brai* (disciples of *brai*), or sometimes a composite of both—*dul birahi*—and lived mainly in rural areas.

The esoteric practices of *brai* were scrutinized by 19th-century Javanese poets and scholars of the royal court center of Surakarta, who were avid documenters of customs and performance practices of central and east Java. It has been argued that the compilation and representation of tradition by Surakarta's Javanese elite at this time was a symbolic response to the increasing hegemony of the Dutch in the political and social spheres (see particularly Pemberton 1994). A major thrust of this encyclopedic project was to establish internal Others, primitive communities of the Javanese countryside, to illuminate the refinement and civilization of Javanese court culture.

The most significant text in this Javanist project was the *Centhini,* an early 19th-century encyclopedia of Javanese culture in narrative form (see Sumarsam in this volume). The *Centhini* is the prime example of a genre of Javanese literature, known to philologists as the genre of *santri lelana* (the wandering religious student), that deals centrally with the variety of religion in Java. In these poetic narratives, a seeker after knowledge moves around Java (and often farther afield), sitting at the feet of hermits and sages of different persuasions, participating in devotional activities, questioning local histories and practices, debating the nature of God, and thinking through relations of transcendence and immanence. The pretext to uproot is typically a breeched social relation—a kidnapped bride, a vanished brother or father or son, a forced marriage. But, contrary to romantic expectations, the thrust of these narratives is not character development through personal journey; rather, these texts function to colloquize abstract ways of being in dialogic terms.

The *Centhini* describes a utopian community of 3000 or so *dul birahi* followers (*wong dul birahi*) living in the village of Kanigoro on Java's south sea (Wirawangsa and Ardja Widjaja 1914, 86–101). Days were occupied with communal labor (including building a mosque), fishing, and boating, while nights were devoted to *dhikir* (prayer vigils), with dancing (*emprak*) and choral singing accompanied by *terbang* (frame drum), *kendhang* (double-headed drum), and *angklung* (bamboo shakers). Preaching in the mosque was based on the doctrine of the *wali*, the semi-legendary proselytes who brought Islam to Java in the 15th century. The songs of the *dul birahi* were filled with simple pieties. Texts urged one not to be occupied by fear of death, for one's fate lies in God's hands, and rather to concern oneself in one's days with praise for God, honor, and Truth.

The *Centhini* describes a number of the community's performance events. Some were intimate and small in scale—one featured four female *santri* (mystics) and five male *santri* "with good voices" and one *kendhang* and four *angklung* players. But, some were extravaganzas, for example, with 100 *terbang*, 50 *kendhang* players, hundreds of dancers, and attended by hordes of spectators from the

surrounding area, described as *wong desa* (villagers) or *wong pegunungan* (mountain people), who apprehended the event as a rare spectacle ("the likes of which they had never seen in their lives") and received gifts of rice, spices, cash, and clothes. These events were thus a reversal of typical Javanese performance etiquette—it is normally the case that performers visit sponsors' homes for ritual functions and are paid for their efforts—and were intended in part to attract devotees to join the *brai* sect. The *Centhini* describes how performances ended with group orgies—the passion for God shaded easily into polymorphous passion for the flesh. "They fell like banana logs…men mixed together with women, with those who were lying underneath complacent and those who were nude unconcerned." The *Centhini* provides as well the ethnographic detail that it was the custom of *dul birahi* followers that lower-order *santri* willingly handed over their wives to mystics higher up in the order in these orgies.

The *Centhini*, in its characteristic style, suspends judgment over the behavior of the *dul birahi* of Kanigoro. The *Serat Sastramiruda*, a *wayang kulit* textbook prefaced by a history of performing arts, likewise simply relates that the music-making and dancing of the *santri dulguyering birahi* was the historical precursor of *tayuban*, a Central Javanese social dance accompanied by *gamelan*, without providing moral commentary (Kusumadilaga 1982, 178). But not all Javanese elites were so complacent about this sort of extravagant public display. The *Wedhatama*, perhaps the most famous treatise on Javanese ethics, written in the 1870s or 1880s and popularly attributed to Mangkunegara IV, has this to say:

> In former times secret teachings
> Were not yet made public,
> But now punctilious people make a show of their fabrications,
> In order to let their cleverness be seen—
> Their precepts are most strange.
>
> It is rather like the adherents of the Agama Dul,
> As I recall, like the *santri birai* of the south,
> Along the Pacitan coast.
> There are thousands who believe them
> Whenever they start talking gibberish.
>
> They rush to see
> The divine light that they imagine they know well;
> They look forward to its glow in order to throw themselves upon it;
> They do not understand that such a life
> Has its brains in the wrong place (Robson 1990, 40).

The text shows an urgency to conserve esoteric knowledge and maintain clear boundaries between public and private spheres. But, what does it mean for a life to have "its brains in the wrong place?" A more literal translation of this phrase (*akale kaliru enggon*) denotes that the life strategy of the *santri birai* is misplaced: Divine Light will never be revealed in public performance, but only through private meditation. In this way, the *Wedhatama* denies *brai*'s realization of ecstasy.

Even more severe ethical concerns are articulated in an account of a *brai* performance in the *Guna Driya*, a journalistic account written by Lagu Tama, who lived in the Lawiyan area of Surakarta. The text was inscribed in 1933 but purportedly based on events of 1882, and is very much a product of the age of newspapers. The author provides a detailed account of a *brai* performance occasioned by the wedding of a child of Ragatruna, who is a leader (*kyai*, *panganjur*) of a group of *santri brai* in Ngemplak (a ward of Solo). Twelve *santri brai* from Boyolali, Sumberlawang, and elsewhere unite to form a single performing group under the direction of Ragatruna's relative Ragarunting (from Cilacap). Ragatruna and Ragaruning's students (*gambeng*) together perform *slawatan* (religious songs), comical songs, and dances.

> They bring their *slawatan* musical instruments, firstly *kendhang*, secondly large *terbang* for the firm bass, and thirdly three pairs of *angklung*, one tuned to the tone of 5, and one tuned to the tone of 6. The higher pitched 6 sounds *kil kil kil*, while the *angklung* pitch 5 sounds *kul kul kul*, and they echo each other in performance [*imbalan*] like so: *kil kil kul kul*. [...] Ragarunting gives a vocal opening answered by a vocalization [*senggak*] from all his followers. Then the *angklung* open with *kil kil, kul kul*; the *terbang* is struck in response: *brung*; and the *kendhang* plays: *tak gentak tung tung tung ... Brung, kil-kul kil-brung, thung-thung thung-thung tak-brung*. And the *santri* chant [*senggak*]: *yola, yela yaelola, Mukamaddun rasaullullah*. The *santri* shift to the high register, singing in piercing falsetto so loud that their faces turn red, as each is eager to make sure his voice is heard. A quarter of an hour later they stop ...

After a brief pause for refreshments, the concert resumes with rhymed poems (*guritan*) by a *santri* named Burhan Sidik, with each verse answered by a standard loud chant (*senggak*) from the assembled *santri*: *he-e, elo iya lalah*. Lagu Tama interprets this chant as a mixture of surprise, affirmation, and praise, but it might also be a corruption of the Arabic *la ilaha illa'llah*, "there is no god but Allah," the beginning of the profession of faith, just as the chant *Mukamaddun rasaullullah* almost certainly means "Mohammad is His Prophet." Burhan Sidik stands up,

stamps on the ground three times as he holds his breath and recites a magical formula to gain the audience's attention. As spectators jostle to get a place at front, he takes off his outer garments, rolls up his sleeves, and does a spinning dance. As he dances, he sings comical and mildly erotic improvised verse, including one about a Ngemplak woman lusting after a handsome *santri* and another about a *santri* who receives five women as a gift from his *kyai* teacher. Lagu Tama reports female spectators talking among each other about how they would like to sleep with the dancing performer. None seems to notice that Burhan Sidik limps slightly due to a lame leg.

Lagu Tama takes a strong moralistic stance against this sort of performance and the background of its performers, charging the *santri brahi* with the use of magic and the dark arts involving the consumption of rat pups. Their singing is a sort of love spell (*kemat*) that charms women, which is why, according to the author, elderly, toothless, senile *santri brahi* can have as many as six wives. Their only goal is the pursuit of sex and pleasure, without heeding the basic needs of women for attention, money, and a house. The author distinguishes the *santri brai* from "ordinary *santri*" (*santri lugu*) who follow the Qur'an, pray five times a day, and avoid sin. *Santri brahi*, in contrast, only attend to worldly pleasures. He advises the reader that one can tell a genuine *santri Islam* from a *santri brahi* in that the former plays only *terbang* and that their chant (*senggakan*) only mentions the name of the Prophet, while the latter plays *terbang*, *kendhang* and *angklung*, sings risqué songs, dances extravagantly, and wears flashy clothes. Lagu Tama notes that the *brai* performance reminded him of the *Centhini*, as well as the *Cabolek*, a related text from 18th-century Java. But Lagu Tama does not share the ethical relativism of his precursors.

Brai in Dutch Colonial Scholarship

The *Guna Driya* is a document illuminating what Ricklefs (2007) has termed the polarization of Javanese society, an articulation of an ideological movement that began in the 19th century to distinguish genuine Islam from the syncretic teachings of the *wali* and the Sufic practices of the Javanese countryside. The word *santri*, which originally referred to all sorts of seekers after spiritual knowledge, was becoming narrowed to refer exclusively to orthodox Muslims. Heterodox practices were being monitored and repressed by Javanese religious officials, Javanese government agents, and Dutch colonials.

The scholar-missionary C. Poensen, who was stationed in the Jombang and Kediri area of east Java between 1863 and 1891, included a brief but scathing commentary about *santri birahi*, based in part on the report of a Javanese Christian

preacher, in an article in a Dutch missionary journal (Poensen 1864, 226f). Poensen notes that, like proper Muslims, *santri birahi* shaved their hair (unlike Javanese Hindus, who let their hair grow long) and dressed in a similar way to "true *santri*" (*santri leres*). But, there the resemblance ceased. Their very name condemned them, for, to Poensen, *birahi* denotes only "desire, lust, love, amour, nubile," without reference to the word's spiritual overtones. In Poensen's eyes, the *santri birahi* were wretched and contemptible, unmarried but sleeping freely with dancing girls and public women, living in lust, gambling, neglecting all spiritual discipline and avowing that "heaven is on earth, hell is on earth, and there is no resurrection for the dead." According to Poensen, they spoke often about *dewa* (Hindu gods) and *widadari* (Hindu heavenly nymphs). Poensen notes they used a *terbang* in their assemblies, but admits he was unable to observe their practices as "these remain a secret for the uninitiated." Armchair anthropologist P.J. Veth (1912, 155) concludes from Poensen's description that *santri birahi* are "the scum of Javanese society."

Poensen's account, and very likely the Javanese literary accounts discussed above, were based on partial knowledge, ideological prejudice, and perhaps fantasy. The texts objectify *brai* followers in terms solely of their esoteric public performances, and provide minimal insight into their inner lives.

A more sympathetic approach to *brai* was made by colonial administrators-scholars A.A.C. Linck and P. de Roo de La Faille in a 1921 journal article. The article sprung from the accidental meeting of de Roo de La Faille with a group of men and women singing, doing circle dances, and bathing at the hot spring of Cipanas, near Palimanan, 14 kilometers west of the city of Cirebon. The Cipanas hot spring was traditionally an important pilgrimage site for Cirebonese; bathing in its water was believed to bring fortune and long life (*Tjerimai* January 16, 1892). A particularly auspicious time to visit was Lebaran, the celebration marking the end of the month of fasting, and, after the tramline was laid between Cirebon and Kadipaten in 1901, thousands thronged to the hot springs of Palimanan during this holiday (*Tjerimai* January 15, 1902). The hot springs of Palimanan were also enjoyed by Europeans, who bathed and picnicked in the vicinity, and, after several decades of petitioning, proper bath houses were constructed in 1934 (*Het Noorden* May 3, 1934). The Chinese of Cirebon also occasionally bathed and held parties at the Cipanas spring (*De Noordkust* September 10, 1914). This chance encounter at this multicultural site inspired de Roo de La Faille to conduct initial research into the devotees, completed by Linck with the assistance of Wangsadipradja, a healthcare worker stationed in Kuningan.

Linck states that it is his not intention to damage Veth's good reputation, but that he saw little that was immoral or heretical in the behavior of the devotees, who furthermore are not referred to as *santri birahi* but simply as *birahi*. They

were as devout as Muslims as most other Javanese. They were indistinguishable from other Javanese except when they performed as an ensemble. Linck and de Roo de La Faille view *birahi* as a tradition on the decline due primarily to the influence of the official version of Islam. Once in the Cirebon area, there were head gurus in the villages of Danalaya, Tangkil, and Watubelah ministering to disciples throughout the cultural area. This network had atrophied by 1921 and *birahi* groups functioned independently.

These groups were made up of about 10 members each and performed music and song to enliven *hajatan* (ceremonies), including weddings, circumcisions, communal celebrations associated with the Islamic months of Mulud and Ruwah, and the 7th, 40th, and 100th day anniversaries of deaths. Unlike most other performing ensembles, the *birahi* groups were not commercially minded and did not set a fixed tariff, but accepted whatever a sponsor offered them, typically between three and five guilders a night.

Linck observed a performance by one of the two *birahi* groups from the village of Gamel. This group was led by a woman named Bi Maher, who was referred to as the group's *dhalang.* (The word *dhalang* is used in Cirebon to refer to lead performers, not reserved exclusively for puppeteers as elsewhere in Java.) Other groups were led by women *dhalang* as well. There were nine other members—five female singers and four male musician-singers (*panjak*), two playing the *gembyung* (an alternate term for *terbang*), one playing the *kendang*, and one who was either clapping or playing the *keprak* or *kecrek* (a rattle instrument made from two blocks of wood, struck with a wooden hammer). The performance began at 8 PM and ran until 4 AM, the typical duration of a *wayang* performance, and consisted of the singing of a selection of 64 pieces (*pantun lagu*) in their repertoire. Songs began with a vocal introduction from the *dhalang,* who was then joined by the percussion instruments and then the chorus. In between sets of *lagu*, the singers and *panjak* helped themselves to refreshments, while the *dhalang* sang out loud from a handwritten book (*lontar*) written in Javanese with Arabic characters they referred to as the *Lontar Sujinah*.

The *birahi* groups also performed exclusively for their own ritual purposes. Their annual pilgrimage to Cipanas involved bathing in the Sumberjaya hot spring, circle dancing, and singing songs (without *terbang* or *kendhang*) in the surrounding caves. In another annual pilgrimage to the royal cemetery of Astana Gunung Jati, they presented offerings to the ancestors and had a ritual meal with rice in the shape of a cone (*tumpeng*). The authors mention that *birahi* had previously made an annual pilgrimage to the peak of Mount Ciremai. This mountain was a sacred place to followers of *birahi,* but climbing it had recently become forbidden. This injunction seems to have been directed specifically against native climbers; there seem to have been no impediments to Dutch climbers (cf. *Cheribonsche Courant* June 5, 1925).

Linck was curious about what beliefs the *birahi* practitioners held, but seemed to have problems in establishing rapport. He learned that Bi Maher was literate in Arabic script as she had studied as a child how to read the Qur'an (*ngaji*), but all she could say about why she read the *lontar* was that it was required for her to do so. Linck, in the manner of the well-trained philologist, believed that a proper inspection of the *lontar* would reveal the group's philosophy and beliefs, even if the members themselves were inarticulate. He was able to collect texts for a sizeable portion of the group's songs, including three sets of what he termed "domestic songs" (20 stanzas in all) and the texts for five songs sung at Cipanas, which he dutifully translated into Dutch as an appendix to the article. I will return to these song texts later.

The research of Linck and de Roo de la Faille is one of the few published accounts of the performing arts of Cirebon by Dutch colonial Javanologists, who generally did not recognize how distinctive Cirebon's artistic traditions were until the 1930s. The report is of interest from numerous perspectives. It suggests, first of all, that the *brai* tradition of Cirebon was differentiated from other areas by a local network of teachers and disciples and a pilgrimage circuit that articulates with Cirebon's sacred geography. All Cirebonese Muslims recognize Astana Gunung Jati as a sacred site. The physical and spiritual apex of this graveyard on a hill is the tomb of Sunan Gunung Jati, the *wali* who founded the Cirebon sultanate—which is closed to all except direct descendants. There are, however, smaller tombs and shrines that are regularly visited by all and sundry, including a number of gravesites visited by Chinese Buddhists (Muhaimin 2006). I am not aware of other Cirebonese who climb Ciremai for spiritual reasons; de Roo de la Faille mentions that even villagers living at its foothills rarely if ever made the climb. But this mountain, known to Cirebonese as Gunung Gede (Large Mountain), plays an orienting role for Cirebonese as Bromo does for Tenggerese and Gunung Agung for Balinese. Cipanas is significant not only for its potent hot springs, but also because this is the center of the legendary ogre kingdom of Palimanan. Though this kingdom and its ruler, Ki Gedhe Palimanan, vanished with the coming of Islam, the spirits of ogres are said to still haunt Gunung Kromong and other hills and caves of Palimanan. The caves visited by the *brai* disciples are not just indentations into the earth; they are believed to provide passage to China, the holy sites of the Arabian Peninsula, and other significant sites. The pilgrimage practices of *brai* are consonant with very ancient patterns of Javanese culture, for springs, caves, and hills have been considered sacred since prehistory, and it is widely believed that a network of tunnels traverses Java that magically connect the island to the world (Quinn 2004).

Another facet of the Cirebonese tradition is its emphasis on female performers. While the Solonese accounts center on male figures, de Roo de la Faille accounts that all the *brai* groups are led by a female *dhalang*. The men play an accompanying

role: Their designation as *panjak* equates them to the musicians who accompany *dhalang wayang* (puppeteers) in performance. François Valentijn, writing about early 18th-century Java, notes ensembles of female voices accompanied by *terbang* and *bedhug*, so this appears to be a very old form indeed (cited in Kunst 1973, vol. 1, 114). I would go so far as to even suggest a musical connection with the female choral singing of Balinese *sanghyang* trance-dance. The form was very ancient and simultaneously tied into the local ritual economy.

The antiquity of *brai*, rather than its contemporaneity, made it of interest to Dutch philologist Theodore Pigeaud, scholar-administrator E.W. Maurenbrecher, and members of the Royal Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences (Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen). A copy and Malay translation of the *lontar* purportedly read by Bi Maher in performance was made. This, it turned out, was not in fact the *Sujinah*, but another Islamic narrative about a faithful wife, the *Murtasiyah*.[4] Both texts circulate widely in Java, and are found in many collections of *suluk*. These texts were well known to *dhalang maca*, Cirebonese reciters of the manuscript tradition, and the *Murtasiyah* remains a staple of this art, considered by traditionalists as compulsory reading at *memitu* (seven-month pregnancy) ceremonies.[5]

The folklorist-administrator E.W. Maurenbrecher, who was appointed Assistant Resident of Cirebon in 1936, organized the first exhibit of the arts of Cirebon (at Yogyakarta's Sono Budoyo Museum in 1937), wrote a number of articles on Cirebon's traditional arts for the journal *Djawa*, and also had an interest of *brai*. Maurenbrecher collected and compiled a set of 38 *brai* song texts (*sajak birahi*). He enlisted the assistance of the great Leiden-trained Javanese philologist Poerbatjaraka to interpret the texts. Poerbatjaraka, not surprisingly, found them "very corrupt." After deciding that he would not use these texts for his own research, Maurenbrecher sent a copy of the texts to Pigeaud in 1940.

Pigeaud's interest in *brai* was established by an entry in his encyclopedia of Javanese folk performance on "*birai* and *genjringan* in Cirebon" (Pigeaud 1938, 266ff). Pigeaud recognized *birai* as a residue of early Javanese Islam, understanding its syncretism as being in line with other Cirebonese syncretic beliefs and practices, such as the Madrais cult of Kuningan. He recognized an affinity with other Islamic musical groups that recite *salawat* praise songs to the accompaniment of *terbang*, but believed that *brai* was distinguished by its emphasis on female performers and rootedness in local geography. *Brai*, in Pigeaud's argument, is an essentially agrarian cultural form that has a completely different sensibility to mosque-associated *salawat* groups in towns and cities that are oriented to "international Islam" (Pigeaud 1938, 268). Its agrarian roots made it resistant to change. While another Cirebonese frame drum ensemble known as *genjringan* had become commercialized in the 1920s and 1930s and was selling tickets and

incorporating acrobatics, high wire acts, costumes, and circus tricks, *brai* remained a resolutely spiritual form of expression. Pigeaud saw *brai* as a specifically Cirebonese expressive form, and while he was able to compare it to the custom of female choral singing in a mixture of Arabic and Sundanese for funerary rites in Sumedang, he did not provide any examples of *brai* ensembles outside of Cirebon, indicating the *brai* was effectively extinct outside of Cirebon by the end of the colonial period.

Brai as Cirebonese Culture

The Cirebonese identity of *brai* became a significant part of the form's existence starting in the 1970s, with one performing group, the *brai* group of Bayalangu known as Nurul Iman, receiving almost exclusive official attention.[6] The idea of *kebudayaan Cerbon* (Cirebonese culture) was in part a reflex of the attention of Indonesian and expatriate cultural elites in Jakarta and Bandung in this part of Java, which is readily accessible as a weekend destination or even a day trip by train. Antiques such as *keris,* puppets, masks, and batik cloth were avidly collected. Collectors brought their books showing museum batiks from Cirebon to the batik makers of Trusmi, and old styles, such as *mega mendung*, were restored. Reverse painting on glass (*lukisan kaca*), which had largely replaced the older tradition of *tlawungan* (weaponry display boards) as a domestic wall decoration, received substantial interest as well, and prices began to mount. *Topeng* (mask dance) performers from the Cirebon area were brought to Bandung to teach Sundanese dance students. Money poured in from central funds to restore the water palace of Sunyaragi as a cultural park and to renovate Cirebon's *kraton* and other historical monuments. Cirebonese cultural workers were employed to collect, transliterate, and translate the manuscripts of *dhalang maca*, and a cottage industry sprang up to produce history texts written in pseudo Middle Javanese. Exhibitions and performances were organized in Jakarta and other cities, and a volume of essays on Cirebonese tradition titled *Cerbon* was published (Abdurachman 1982). A cultural foundation was established by and for rich business people and government officials of Cirebon origin, who produced extravagant *sendratari* dance dramas in a newly constructed open-air stage adjacent to Sunyaragi. Cirebon's *kraton*, which had paid little heed to the arts since the 1930s, began to take an active interest in culture and nobles began to study glass painting, music, dance, *wayang*, and other arts themselves. Small numbers of foreign students went to Cirebon to conduct academic and practical study of the arts and Cirebonese were inspired to write undergraduate and master's level theses on their artistic heritage.

The rediscovery of *brai* must be seen as a part of this intra-cultural history. A pivotal moment occurred in the 1960s, when an artist from the town of Gegesik, Lesek Sudarga, was in Jakarta during a rainy season hawking his reverse paintings on glass when he happened upon the Bakti Budaya arts studio, founded in 1961 by Bernard Suryabrata (a.k.a. Bernard IJzerdraat). Suryabrata was a Dutch-born arts impresario and ethnomusicologist who had been mentored by Jaap Kunst in the 1940s and became an Indonesian citizen in 1966. He produced a number of European tours of traditional music, dance, and puppetry; produced LP recordings of Indonesian music for European labels; and taught in a number of academic institutions including the private Universitas Nasional (National University). Suryabrata played a critical role in brokering traditional performing arts to Jakarta elites, expatriates, and cultural tourists in the 1960s and 1970s, and he led tours for clients wishing to see village performance traditions performed in village settings. Suryabrata's encounter with the Gegesik artist resulted in a fruitful partnership. Not only did Suryabrata purchase the artist's paintings, the Gegesik artist, who was a performer as well as painter, joined the Bakti Budaya performing troupe. Suryabrata made regular trips to Gegesik from the early 1970s until his death in the 1980s, both alone and with tour groups, entering into an unofficial marriage with a relative of the Gegesik artist.

Tour groups organized by Suryabrata visited the *brai* group based in Bayalangu, the village directly south of Gegesik. The village of Bayalangu, with its narrow paths and dusty houses made of brick and bamboo thatch, had a special charm for Suryabrata. Unlike Gegesik, which was being modernized in the 1970s, Bayalangu appears to have been a much more traditional village, and its antiquity is indeed attested to by historical chronicle literature and a collection of *pusaka* (heirlooms) stored in its village hall (*bale desa*) said to have belonged to Nyi Mas Panguragan and the village founder, Ki Gedeng Bayalangu, and a number of the early village headmen (*kuwu*) (Moens 1984, 44). Local legends and myths circulate that Bayalangu's *lemah duwur* (elevated land), also known as Pulo Mejeti, was the resting place of King Solomon's ring and that Bayalangu is one of a number of villages in Cirebon that contend for the title of *puser bumi* (world navel) (Sujana n.d.).

The Bayalangu *brai* ensemble is distinguished from other societies by its *bale*, a four-posted elevated platform about a meter high located in a thatched hut owned by one of the society's members (who receives the special designation of *kyai*).[7] Suryabrata commissioned performances of the group in the *bale* on at least four occasions and made at least three recordings of selections of their songs.[8] A short piece on *brai* in Suryabrata's posthumous collection of essays, *The Island of Music*, provides a taste of how Suryabrata introduced *brai* to his tour groups.

> The place for the meeting of the *brai* singers…was already in existence for many centuries…[and] is all that is left over from an actual ceremonial building of long ago. From the beams of the roof hang several drums, always at the ready. A frame drum of a blackened black wood shows its age. It is probably four hundred years old. When it is not played upon, it hangs also from the beams, waiting to be used again. […] They sing in a literary language, maybe Kawi but what it means is no part of their upbringing. Old it is, at least, so they tell themselves. […] The singing and drumming is properly monotonous, as religious songs require, yet the rhythm is exciting and touching, in spite of a simplistic concept. […] Their voices sing first of all songs and secondly the songs of peace, never ceasing. (Suryabrata 1987, 94–96)

Suryabrata offered to provide a donation for the *bale,* and at his last visit proposed taking the *brai* group on tour to Turkey, believing that its Sufic musical traditions would make people in Turkey particularly responsive to *brai*. This created a great sensation (*gawe geger*) in Bayalangu, and in the end the village headman refused to give his stamp of approval as (he said) the *brai* members were too old to travel internationally and the stress of the journey might be fatal.[9]

Bayalangu's *brai* group has benefited from other private patrons attentive to Cirebonese culture. Ethnomusicologist Endo Suanda, who grew up in the Cirebon area and has been one of the most energetic promoters of Cirebonese performing arts in Indonesia and abroad, has recorded and written about *brai* (see, e.g., Suanda 1998, 695f) and facilitated a number of performances in Bandung, Jakarta, and other Indonesian cities. In the 1990s, he worked on a proposal with a German composer for a recording project based on the music of *brai*, without success it seems. The Gegesik-based puppeteer Mansyur, the former head of the Cirebon branch of the Indonesian Puppetry Union (PEPADI), has hired this *brai* group to perform at cultural festivals he has organized and profiles the group as one of five cultural forms associated with his arts studio, Sanggar Langen Budaya.[10] The most significant financial contributions have likely come from the Jakarta scenographer Roedjito. Roedjito, who was a spiritually minded Haji and remarkably knowledgeable about both contemporary and traditional performance, told me he was touched by the simple piety and earnestness of Bayalangu's *brai* group. He provided them with a private grant that allowed them to build a concrete building around the *bale* in place of the thatch hut, which was then redesignated as a *sanggar* (arts studio). My wife and I have also played a minor role in relation to *brai* by making small financial contributions to the group and its members, undergoing a formal initiation into the Bayalangu group, attending performances and sponsoring one ourselves, and supporting their efforts to raise funds to build a *sanggar*.

The regional, provincial, and national governments have paid *brai* sporadic attention over the last decades, sponsoring performances, providing limited subsidies, and conducting research. In order to accept performance commissions, the Bayalangu group was required to take on an official name in 1986, Nurul Iman ("Light of Faith" in Arabic), and to obtain a *surat keputusan* (letter of decree, generally abbreviated as SK) from the *kabupaten* local government. An SK is required of all artistic companies, and the process was time-consuming and prone to corruption in the New Order period. The group does not generally use the name on its SK, however, and on a number of occasions the group also has referred to itself as Sekar Mulya ("Noble Song" in Javanese). Festival performances brokered by government agents have brought occasional income for group members, money for "rehabilitating" the *sanggar*, and costumes and other scenic trappings. Most of these festivals have been at the regional level, such as the 1992 Gelar Budaya (Cultural Display) in Tasikmalaya or the 1997 Festival Kraton (Royal Court Festival) in Cirebon, but the group also performed in 1995 in the Istiqlal Festival, a national festival of Islamic art held in the vicinity of Jakarta's Istiqlal Mosque. There is some merit to Suanda's (1998, 696) statement that "the group is more a devotional sect than a performing ensemble." Only one of the *panjak* active in the Bayalangu group in the 1990s played professionally as a musician, and while some of the singers had pleasing voices, none were trained. Devotees do not speak about themselves as artists (*seniman*) but as followers of *brai* (*wong brai*); however, they are treated by the government as an artistic group rather than as a religious institution. *Brai* was selected in 2000 by Indonesia's Directorate for the Arts as one of the ten Indonesian performing arts to be included in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Database on Intangible Cultural Heritage.[11] Though the arts selected were to be targeted for preservation and promotion, this international recognition has not yet brought any direct benefits to *brai* groups.

Brai in Practice

The Bayalangu group is made up mostly of women and men between the ages of 50 and 80 who work as farmers, have limited education, and are poor even by rural Javanese standards. A number of them have special status; no member is designated as *dhalang*, but some are accorded Islamic titles. This seems to be a relatively recent occurrence, reflecting a more general trend toward Islamization in Indonesian society. The *imam* (devotional leader) of the group, until his death in 1998, was Warsa Ganjur, a villager of moderate means and formal education. Warsa was highly knowledgeable about local culture, and was a fascinating partner for dialogue, but at the same time he was pious and self-effacing.

He played a major artistic role, singing the vocal solos and playing *kendhang*, and also was the repository of the group's traditions. The group's *kyai* (also referred to as *pimpinan*, or "leader," in official government documents) was Retina bin Tarsa. Retina could also play *kendhang*, and would alternate with Warsa. More significantly, he owned the land where the *bale* was situated, and after his death the position of *kyai* consequently was inherited by Retina's young son. The group's secretary in official documents was Dakila, who functioned as Warsa's assistant. After Warsa suffered a stroke in 1997, Dakila sang the solo parts along with Warsa, and when Warsa died, Dakila became the group's *imam*. A woman named Kurwati is also singled out in some official documents as the group's *juru kawi* or main singer—her confident and piercing voice leads the female chorus. In all, 23 members are noted in the group's SK, but the number of performers varies from performance to performance.

The Bayalangu group performs regularly in public at the Astana Gunung Jati cemetery (five times annually) and at shrines in Trusmi (two to three times) and Danalaya (once), as well as at Bayalangu's own cemetery (once). These public appearances are considered acts of homage or veneration (*atur-atur*) to the ancestors, and occur mostly in conjunction with large-scale ritual events. These events, such as the annual *nadran* celebrations at Astana Gunung Jati, attract up to 100,000 visitors or more and might feature as many as 30 performing ensembles (such as *sandiwara*, *tarling*, *topeng*, *wayang golek*, *wayang kulit*, *dangdut*), all of them performing simultaneously (cf. Muhaimin 2006, 197). Other *brai* groups also participate in some of these events, sometimes on alternate nights. At Trusmi, the Bayalangu group regularly performs in conjunction with *brai* groups from Gamel and Bakung. *Brai* tends not to be amplified and audiences are very small. Typically no more than 50 are listening, and most attending do not stay for very long. *Brai* groups are not paid for these devotional performances, though sometimes their transportation costs are subsidized and they are likely to be offered food and refreshments.

The Bayalangu group also performs at least seven times annually on their own *bale* on auspicious days in the Javanese calendar.[12] There is generally no audience in the *bale* for these performances and no amplification is used, though the sound of singing, drumming, and clapping can be heard by neighbors. Unlike the *brai* groups documented by de Roo de la Faille and Linck (1921), *brai* today is very rarely engaged by private patrons to enliven ritual events like circumcisions or weddings. *Brai* devotees do not talk about their performances as art, but as ritual events; some use the Arabic word *dzikir* (meditation, chanting remembrances of God; also called *dhikr* in this volume).

Brai groups also perform ceremonies involving singing (but not drumming) at Mount Ciremai and Cipanas, as described by Roo de la Faille and Linck (1921). These pilgrimages or visits (*ziarah*) have special significance for Bayalangu's

Figure 4.1. The Bayalangu-based *brai* group Nurul Iman performing at the author's house in Gegesik in 1995. (photo by author)

brai group. The Bayalangu group climbed Ciremai some 14 times during the 1980s and 1990s at their own cost for the most part. I have described one of these trips at some length (Cohen 2005). Here, I would like to spend some time on Cipanas, which I visited with the Bayalangu group and others from Bayalangu (a group of 48 in all) in 1995.[13]

Warsa was clear that the primary motivation for going to Cipanas was tradition. It was beholden to "follow in the footsteps of our elders."[14] The changed conditions of the site did not make this easy. The Cipanas hot spring now lies within the grounds of an Indocement factory that is strip-mining the lime-rich Mount Kromong and other surrounding hills. Access is limited and photography strictly prohibited. The Cirebon belief that these hills are the domain of the ogre spirits of Palimanan seems to play little role in the cement industry's calculations. Maurenbrecher (1940) records *brai* texts sung in eight different caves at Cipanas,[15] but only one of these was accessible in 1995. The Bayalangu group visits the hot spring once a year, normally in December after the end of the harvest. In the past, they would walk there as a group, leaving Bayalangu at 2 or 3 AM and arriving at 8 or 9 AM. But in recent years they have chartered a bus, making for a short trip. There is not as much ritual action to perform, and devotees believe that the sanctity of the site has been *diaruhi* (disturbed) by the surrounding industrial activity.

Figure 4.2. The Bayalangu-based *brai* group Nurul Iman performing at the author's house in Gegesik in 1995. The photo shows a musician playing the *terbang*. (photo by author)

The first thing the Bayalangu group did on arriving at Cipanas was to report to the site's *kuncen* (caretakers). Warsa gives the head caretaker uncooked rice and money. He informs him that the group came to bathe and visit the cave. The caretaker's wife loans the group an incense burner, as the caretaker offers his blessings for peace (*slamet*) and a successful rice-planting (*tandur*) season.

The group then goes to the hot springs and searches for the pool of water that is most fitting to bathe in. One of the group members complains that the water is not as hot as it used to be before the hills were all dug up. Women in the group collect leaves of *krakas* (mangrove fern) that grow wild in the area to take home as a souvenir of their visit; these leaves, they say, can be boiled and used medicinally as *boreh* (ointment) or as a tea to relieve aches and sprains. A suitable pond is located and the incense burner is placed at its side and incense lit. Warsa

opens a small packet of flower petals and fragrant leaves wrapped in newspaper and casts them on the water's surface as the group sings a song: "Boiling, following the Prophet Muhammad's ways, O God, glittering light" (*Mungpal-mungpal nglakoni Nabi Mukamad, Hu Allah, cahya sumirat*; compare Linck and de Roo de la Faille 1921, 176). As the group sings, Warsa cups up the water and drinks. The *brai* members take off their outer garments. The men wear only underwear, the women wear *kain* skirts and bras. Each of the devotees washes their faces (*ngraup*) and then Warsa splashes water on the faces and backs of each of the devotees. Though they are still singing, there is lots of excitement—shouts, laughter—as each member is splashed in turn. The breast of one woman is briefly exposed, but there is no self-consciousness. I ask why they bathe and am told so that they know peace (*slamet*) and are granted a long life (*panjang umur*). I wash my face in the water—it is warm but not hot, and has a faintly sulphuric odor. The devotees fill up empty bottles with the sacred water. Some drink the water as well.

Warsa then leads the group to a nearby cold stream (*banyu adhem*) where Warsa sings another song: "Spirit of feeling, spirit of self, bathing, straight through the seven levels of earth" (*Sukma rasa sukma nira, siram terus bumi lapis pitu*; compare Linck and de Roo de la Faille 1921, 175).

The group then processes to a grave complex of approximately 8x5 meters that contains four ancient graves enclosed by a wall on three sides and backed by a cliff. These are the graves of four Muslims: Syekh Lebu Api, Syekh Bulyamin, Syekh Patukbayul, Syekh Penungpuntul (or Kakang Aking). Accounts of their origin and significance vary. The graves are Islamic in style but very long (perhaps three meters), and some say that this is proof that those buried there were ogres who converted to Islam. Others contend that they were devout men originally from Bayalangu. Some say these are not graves at all, but the markers of ogres who disappeared into the ether after the defeat of Palimanan and the arrival of Islam. Standing perhaps 20 meters from the shrine, the men in front, the women behind, the devotees sing a *brai* song in Arabic for the Lord's forgiveness (*astagfirullah*) for perhaps two minutes. The caretaker unlocks the gate, and the group sits on a shaded platform in the complex. Others sit on the side. More incense is burned. The *al-Fatehah* invocation (the opening chaper of the Qur'an) is recited five times and the proclamation of faith in God and His Prophet Mohammad is sung in enthusiastic chorus, with clapping and solo sections in the *brai* style. *Ilahaillahah . . . Allah ila, ilaha ilala. ILALA. Mukamad hu rasul Allah. Allahu hi la ilaha ilala, Allah ilaha. Ilaha ilala, Mukamad dul rasul Allah. Op, a!* Many of the non-*brai* members present, including children, join in. This goes on for perhaps 10 minutes. When the song is over, Warsa and Retina move from left to right scattering flowers on top of each of the graves, the custom for graveyard visits in Java. A child says *wis* (it's done), a recognition that this part of the ceremony is over.

We then go to a cave, Guwa Dalem (Inner Cave), located in a small cliff directly hanging over the gravesite. Brief prayers are offered and incense lit. Warsa shouts out *ha!* three times in succession. The shouting, I am told, is a form of greeting, done in the same way that one shouts out "peace be unto you" (*asalamaualaikum*) when one visits a house. That way, if there is a being that is sitting or sleeping inside the cave, it will get up and one won't step on it. Warsa recites a Javanese-language magical formula (*musali pati wekasan, seanane ning Pengeran*) as he knocks three times on the door into the cave. The caretaker unlocks the door, and the group members enter and exit the small cave in single file. When the group leaves, Warsa recites another formula (*asada antanahu selakae Pengeran*) in mixed Javanese and Arabic.

The group then descends from the cliff and sings "sudden descent, a pathetic child needs life, O God, bow to the Lord, seeing the remains of people of old" (*jog tumurun, lare alip nedah gesang, Hu Allah, [...], sembah bakti maring Pangeran, ningali tapakane wong dingin*; compare Linck and de Roo de la Faille 1921, 172). I ask who the "pathetic child" refers to. I am told "that is us, of course. There are the rich, the powerful, the entitled. We, in contrast, are among the commoners, the ignorant."

Meanings and Significances

Brai has been described as a medium for proselytizing and the affirmation of faith. An opening statement written in the 1990s by a university-educated resident of Bayalangu for the group to read in official settings states that *brai* is a form of worship of God and praise for God and the Prophet, as well as way to spread the teachings of Islam. Others have described *brai* as an act of devotion, while the office of the Directorate for the Arts describes *brai* performances as an "Islamic sectarian religious ceremony."[16] These descriptions are all true in their ways, but do not get at the experiential aspects or inner meanings of *brai*.

One way to begin to approach *brai* as a lived performance culture is to examine the sung texts. These texts exist in multiple written and oral forms and are in a combination of Arabic—corrupt and only half-understood by the performers—and Javanese—couched in mystical symbolism open to many interpretations. A full analysis is thus beyond the scope of this essay, but some preliminary observations are possible based on available transcriptions. The Bayalangu *brai* group divides their songs into five *rakaat* (prayer units)—the same word is used for the structural units of daily Islamic prayer—which are performed over an approximately seven-hour period (from 8 PM until 3 AM). One structural analysis conceptualizes the progression of *rakaat* as a representation of

progress along the mystic path toward enlightenment (Hasyim 1995). The first *rakaat* consists mostly of versions of standard Arabic prayer texts, understood only partially by the *brai* members, that praise God's greatness and call on people to pray before it is too late. The second *rakaat*, which has a lower proportion of Arabic and thus is more comprehensible, advocates introspection and awareness of human fallibility. The third urges distance from the world. The fourth proposes God as the only True Reality. The fifth compels us to consider our life's goals. A concluding set of three songs (*Awal-Awal*, *Rohman-Rahim*, *Sifat Rong Puluh*) are meditations on the everlasting nature of God, the loving kindness of God, and the attributes of God.

The texts demonstrate an intense awareness of mortality and the inevitability of death, urging repentance while there is still the opportunity to do so in this world. This is in keeping with the agrarian world of *brai* followers, for death is never far away in village Java. "Community is revealed in the death of others; hence it is always revealed to others" (Nancy 1991, 15). Most of the song texts are cast in an impersonal imperative voice, but some address *brai* followers specifically (e.g., "if you follow *brai*, be cautious and aware of the four *napsu*," the primal urges of hunger, anger, desire, and power) (Maurenbrecher 1940, 2). Such admonitions suggest that the texts are not exclusively directed outwards toward an audience, but are intended to instill values in the performers themselves. This intent is in keeping with performance practice; nobody except the performers themselves are likely to sit through the whole cycle of *rakaat*, and only experienced performers will have sufficient familiarity with the sung texts to hazard guesses regarding their meanings. Maurenbrecher's set of *birahi* songs concludes with a verse that suggests the whole yearly cycle of visits, travel, and pilgrimage is a spiritual discipline: "O God, we go to Duku, cautiously leaving the place of *birahi*, traveling through Sukalila and on to the village of Trusmi; one arrives at the confession of faith, and purity is guaranteed."

The impact of *brai* is not limited to devotees, however. The group is inclusive in its travels, and children, spouses, and neighbors often come along on its various trips and will sometimes sing and clap. I have described already (Cohen 2005) how a group of young climbers (*pendaki*) came along during the Bayalangu group's 1999 pilgrimage to Ciremai. The youth were well-equipped with new hiking gear, in stark contrast to the bare feet of most of the *brai* group. The climbers had limited previous exposure to *brai* but, despite their punk rock outfits, were respectful of tradition, happy to assist in the rituals, and ready to learn. Another non-*brai* member who went along on this occasion was a Bayalangu farmer in his 70s who had first climbed Ciremai around 1967 along with a friend, walking barefoot from Bayalangu and back. On this trip, he had met a caretaker of the mountain who was possessed by an ancestor spirit, predicted the

day of his death, and gave the farmer a new title and name: Pengeran [Lord] Mulya Nata Wijaya. He hoped to receive another magical (*bultanana*) benefit from this trip. His friend was no longer fit for the trip and joined with the *brai* group even though he would have preferred to have walked from Bayalangu in a small group of two or three. Nobody from the *brai* group, with its emphasis on humility and embracement of subaltern status, would imagine receiving a noble title as a benefit of climbing Ciremai.

The inclusiveness of *brai* is also registered in its performance style. Texts are generally simple, with many cycles of the same words, and thus it is relatively easy to join in singing the metrical sections. Much of the excitement of performance comes out of the interlocking of four clapping patterns (*tepuk pelag*, *tepuk titir*, *tepuk saingan titir*, and *tepuk makmum*). Unlike the accounts from the colonial period, Bayalangu's *brai* group never dances in performance or in pilgrimages—it is in this sense a purely musical ensemble. But the clapping has a strong visual kinesthetic element. After a performer claps a pattern, she draws her hands to her abdomen with her palms together. This action not only establishes an embodied rhythmic pattern, it makes it easier for spectators to join in with the patterns. At every *brai* performance I have attended, I have seen spectators clapping along with performers. Most start by joining the *tepak makmum* pattern (one clap falling on the downbeat) and then trying out some of the other patterns, such as the *tepuk saingan titir*, a fast clap that interlocks with the *tepuk titir*. None of the patterns are hard to learn, but all of them carry along a visceral sense of being kinesthetically involved and co-present in a moment of communal music making. The body percussion is subtly contagious. As a kinesthetic and musical realization of "being-in-common" (Nancy 1991), it exposes a sense of togetherness without collapsing participants into a unified being. At a *brai* performance I sponsored at my house in Gegesik in 1997, a senior shadow puppeteer in attendance playfully tapped out a *kecrek* part with a spoon and glass. He joked about his unlikely participation in the event, but none of the *brai* performers or anybody in the audience seemed to think anything of it. The music of *brai* stays with you; years after I had attended *brai* performances in the company of another puppeteer, he proposed to me the "golden idea" (*ide mas*) to turn the music into pop songs.

Another set of meanings and significances lies in the way that *brai* performatively restores an early period of Islam. Linck notes that Astana villagers believed that the close association of *brai* and Astana Gunung Jati constituted proof that *brai* existed at the time of the *waliullah*, the semi-legendary saints who introduced Islam to Java (Linck and de Roo de la Faille 1921, 168). Some commentators, not surprisingly, have suggested that the tradition was started by the heterodoxical saint Sheikh Lemahabang or Sunan Panggung, the patron saint of performing

artists. Others claim that *brai* was used by Sheikh Dzatul Kahfi to attract the people of the Hindu kingdom of Galuh to Islam. Dzatul Kahfi, also known as Datulkapi and Datukapi, was a hermit and sage from Mecca who lived at Astana Gunung Jati and was a direct descendent of the Prophet. He is best known in the historical tradition for converting Walangsungsang, one of the founders of Cirebon, to Islam. Dzatul Kahfi's gravesite at the royal cemetery of Gunung Jati remains an important shrine for many Javanese Muslims. Some speak of a student of Dzatul Kahfi named Nyai Mas Ratu Brai as the founder of *brai*. According to one version of the story,

> She was entrusted by her teacher Sheikh Dzatul Kahfi to spread Islam [...] using the art of Cirebon. She filled this art with the noble teachings of Islam and developed the art further so that it touched the hearts of those in attendance. She traveled from place to place proselytizing through this art, which was always received enthusiastically. In fact, many who attended converted to Islam through their close study of the values contained in the poetry and symbols of the art (Masduki Sarpin 1995).

Nyai Mas Ratu Brai is also known as Nyai Mas Ratu Bari, perhaps signifying a relation between the practice of *brai* and the teachings of Seh Bari discussed above.

Outside observers of *brai* often focus on the intense devotion the performers present. The Directorate for the Arts report for UNESCO states, for example that "when the song comes to its climax the people seem to be unconscious."[17] However, a Jakarta photographer who commissioned a *brai* performance from the Bayalangu group and spoke to me in 1999 about an exhibit he was planning called "Journey into Ecstasy" acknowledged that the ecstasy in his title did not refer only to the feelings of the *brai* group members, but his own as a spectator. He looks on, and feels transported into another world, barely able to speak.[18] The presence of the past can be a profoundly humbling experience, and the performance of *brai* brings the world of the ancestors into focus in a most immediate fashion.

Living Room Art

Suprapto Suryodarmo, a movement artist from Solo who applies Buddhist principles, t'ai chi, and traditional Javanese dance and philosophy to explore the environment and create new possibilities for self-expression, has rarely given public performances since the 1970s. He develops his practice through workshops, working closely with

a dozen or so students over a period of days or months. Complex emotions and memories are often engaged in the work, yet Suprapto does not work in walled off spaces, but rather outdoors, before the eyes of invited guests and the incidental passersby. He talks about this approach as "living room art," thinking about the Indonesian living room (*kamar tamu*, literally "guest room") as a transitional space between the inner sanctums of the Javanese house where one eats and sleeps and the outer world. Suryodarmo sees his practice as being in continuity with the semi-public dance rehearsals in the *pendhapa* (pavilions) of the noble houses of central Java and *pencak silat* (martial arts) practices in the Javanese countryside.

Communicating and sharing with Suprapto in performance means acclimating to what I have elsewhere called an "open gallery society," a porous space that enables anyone potentially to become an incidental spectator. When the Dutch colonized Java, they realized that the spectatorial position activated by Java's open gallery society did not exist in The Netherlands, and they thus coined a new word, *nontonner*, from the Batavia Malay word *nonton*, "to go to see a sight" (Cohen 2006, 6). Performing in the open gallery or living room of Java does not entail self-consciousness or stage fright. Rather, Suprapto's workshops "interrupt self-consciousness" and generate a fragile inoperative community in the "clear consciousness at the extremity of its clarity, where consciousness *of* self turns out to be outside the self of consciousness" (Nancy 1991, 19). Such a "clear consciousness" offers channels of attention and engagement that performers can use to energize their creative practices generally. Public space thus is interiorized, and performers expose the singularity of their imaginations without insisting on "fusional interiority" (*ibid*, 29).

Brai is a living room art par excellence. It is not enacted as a rule in formal concert spaces, but in storied places that are familiar to devotees through regular visits. Performances allow for an active involvement of spectators, but are not contingent on a human audience; the performance is essentially a communal expression and affirmation of a relation of love between the devotees and God. They perform with respect to the ways of the ancestors (*wong dingin*) independent of living patrons. Nancy views myth as the repression of freedom. But *brai's* myths are not totalitarian; in accord with the music's polyphony and interlocking patterns, there is no insistence on fusing participants into a totality. Union is sought, but this is an inner experience of union with the divine. Mystical union is facilitated more by social togetherness than endorsement of any formulaic truth. "Only community furnishes this relation its spacing, its rhythm" (Nancy 1991, 18). The "ecstatic consciousness" (*ibid*, 19) of *brai* facilitates a particular sense of "being-in-common," which Nancy identifies as essential to society's health. "This consciousness—or this communication—is ecstasy: which is to say that such a consciousness is never *mine*, but to the contrary, I only have it in and through the community" (*ibid*).

The maintenance of Java as an open gallery society where living room performance is prevalent is a cultural accomplishment that cannot be taken for granted. When I started drafting this essay in 2006, my wife had recently received a distressing piece of news from her brother, who is a school principal and a practicing Baptist living in Bandung. Muslim neighbors had threatened him with violence unless he stopped holding Christian prayer meetings in his house. Such sessions are common in urban Java. When I was living in a predominately Muslim neighboring in Solo in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a similar group met weekly in the front parlor of a neighbor's house. The unamplified church harmonies of their enthusiastic mixed-sex singing could be heard within a radius of a block or two. Their singing's volume was a fraction of the amplified call to prayer broadcast from the neighborhood mosque or the noisy buzz saws of the furniture makers down the road. I never observed authorities interfering in my neighbors' devotional activity nor did I hear any complaints or grumbling. In a typically Solonese fashion, everyone calmly accepted that this was part of what it meant to live in a city, where one was exposed to a diversity of sounds and noises. Assuming that I was Christian, I was asked on a number of occasions by Christian and Muslim neighbors concerned about my spiritual welfare whether I would like to join the choir. (I politely declined.) The distressing news from Bandung caused me to fret that Java's casual acceptance of diversity was coming to an end. The week I finished the first draft of this essay, I heard a more reassuring piece of news. The radical Muslims who had threatened my brother-in-law had moved out of the neighborhood. Not only had they defaulted on their mortgage payments, the neighborhood had turned against them and had made it difficult for them to express their intolerance. Their ejection coincided with the Islamic holiday of Eid and my brother-in-law's neighbors fêted him with seasonal gifts of cooked lamb to confirm his place in the neighborhood.

Yen kesah katon dadae, wangsule katon gigire—"let your chest be visible when you depart, your back visible when you return." This Cirebonese proverb is the reason, Dakila tells me, why before and after his *brai* group visit holy sites they offer prayers, and why each visit is preceded by incense and *sajen* (offerings) including portions of red and white porridge, rice, chicken, coffee, tea, fragrant flower petals, red peppers, betel. "It is like saying *punten, kula nuwun, asalamu alaikum*," formulaic salutations in Javanese and Arabic, "you have to say this when you arrive at and depart from somebody's house."[19] Performing in a living room or gallery performance space is a negotiation aligning the moral person of the performer with a cultural universe that traverses *brai* members and their audiences, the ancestors, spirits, and the divine. This "being-in-common" practice demands etiquette, respect for place, and an awareness of local conditions—a general model for social and spiritual life.

Notes

1. Different religious streams have co-existed in toleration in Java for centuries, and are syncretized in religious rites and symbols such as the *slametan* (ritual meal) (Beatty 1999). Old spirit beliefs are easily incorporated into monotheistic Islam (Muhaimin 2006), and core myths, such as *Dewa Ruci*, a *wayang* story about the search for the inner god, are available for reinterpretation for a variety of religious purposes—Hindu, Islamic, or Christian (Arps 2007; see Sumarsam in this volume).

2. Karang appears in Javanese historiography as a favored site for meditation in the 16th century. It later develops into a center for mystical Islam. There is some debate among scholars about the identity of Seh Bari. See particularly Drewes 1969, 11 and Bruinessen 1994.

3. "Wuru-wuru birahing Hyang Rundawati/Wurne ngaranjam/Angling wuru datan eling/ Anglayung-layung kasmaran/Anggung brangta anedha awar lan gusti/Asra jiwa raga/Ing jiwa angendha ati/ Angdhemnya rasaning tunggal."

4. *Maleische vertaling van de Cheribonsche zogenaamde Lontar Soedjimah* [sic] *der Santri Birahi*, KITLV D Or. 159.

5. *Memitu*, or *mitoni* in Central Java, is a ceremony held during the seventh month of a woman's first pregnancy. Various offerings are given to ensure the safety of woman and unborn child, and the child's sex is predicted by a coconut augury. For a brief account of the *Murtasiyah*, see Wieringa 1995.

6. There are a number of other *brai* groups that exist in the Cirebon area, or were in existence in the 1990s (when I conducted fieldwork in Cirebon), including groups in Wangunharja, Bakung Lor, Gamel, Lebak, Danalaya, Babadan, and Bulak. The Danalaya group was no longer in existence in 1999, and possibly others have folded since. The Bayalangu group bifurcated inthe 1980s; the second group is led by an *imam* named Arnen. This group is not discussed in this chapter. Relations between the two groups are respectful but not warm.

7. The group also has a few *pusaka* (heirlooms) that they hang from the *bale*,including a *beri* (signal gong) and *banyan* (curved knife). They generally take these with them on pilgrimages but there is no specific ritual use attached to them and the *beri* is never sounded.

8. Interview with Warsa, January 24,1996.

9. Interview with Warsa, January 24, 1996.

10. http://www.kelolaarts.or.id/directory.asp?idx=9&id=1034&bhs=E, accessed December 25, 2007.

11. This report refers to *brai* as Salawat Brai (Brai Prayer), a term that is alien to Cirebon. See http://www.accu.or.jp/ich/en/arts/A_IDN6.html, accessed December 26, 2007.

12. These are Sura 27, Mulud 12, Mulud 27, the final Wednesday (*rebo pungkasan*) in Sapar, Puwasa 27, Rajab 27, and Ruwah 15.

13. The information following is based primarily on my fieldnotes of December 20, 1995, with some details of the visit on August 29, 1999 added. According to the site's main caretaker, other *brai* groups visit Cipanas on 29 Mulud in conjunction with the *unjungan* (annual ceremony of remembrance). No *brai* is performed on this day, however.

14. Comment by Warsa Ganjur, December 20, 1995.
15. These are: Guwa Dalem, Guwa Tarub Agung, Guwa Pamejangan, Guwa si Dedali, Guwa si Prada, Guwa si Gedong, Guwa si Mesigit, and Guwa si Gurdamala.
16. http://www.accu.or.jp/ich/en/arts/A_IDN6.html, accessed December 26, 2007.
17. http://www.accu.or.jp/ich/en/arts/A_IDN6.html, accessed December 26, 2007.
18. Fieldnotes August 16, 1999.
19. Fieldnotes, August 29, 1999.

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5

Self-Defense and Music in Muslim Contexts in West Java

Uwe U. Pätzold[1]

Uwe Pätzold explicates the histories and many styles of the movement arts generally known in Indonesia as pencak silat. *A practitioner of* pencak silat *with years of experience, the author corrects the Western misrepresentations of self-defense arts as associated with criminality and sheds new light on the important role the arts have played in instilling spirituality and self-discipline in both Indonesian and Islamic contexts. Within Indonesia, self-defense arts, like music, dance, and theater, were originally used to attract people to Islam. Later, during the Dutch colonial period, they became symbols of resistance. As is the case with Indonesian music, there has been some controversy over the position of these arts vis-à-vis the proper practice of Islam. Organizations, such as Muhammadiyah, have sometimes criticized self-defense arts and their musical accompaniment. Nevertheless Islamic principles, as practiced through physical embodiment, are key to building moral and spiritual character among those who practice various forms of* pencek silat. *Pätzold analyzes the role of Islam in the training and teaching of self defense arts at particular institutions and the differences between more secular, public performance and more religious, private ritual. He notes that the location of study often determines the orientation of the art. If an institution is more public and secular, the religious elements are downplayed; if the location is more specifically Islamic, for example a* pesantren, *then the training and performance are more spiritual. In the latter case, the goal may be to develop inner energy (*batin*) and absolute control over the body (pulse, breath, temperature, etc.), invulnerability, and union with Allah. Musical accompaniment is a key determinant in identifying and generating the various styles of performance. Depending upon the style, religious chant may specify religious performance and double-reed aerophone (*tarompet*) may indicate more secular performance; other instruments in wide use include frame drums (*terbang*). Historically, males have been drawn to this form to develop enhanced spirituality and discipline, but Pätzold also highlights the frequent participation of women, both as students and as teachers.*

Pencak silat[2] is a movement art that has an affinity with many indigenous cultures of Southeast Asia. West Java (Sunda), including Banten and Jakarta, and West Sumatra (Minangkabau) are commonly said to be its historic cradles, and *pencak silat* forms an important part of Indonesian and Southeast Asian cultures on regional, national, and international levels. At its core, *pencak silat* is perceived to be an art of self-defense. Traditional and modern performance contexts in Southeast Asian cultures include settings such as weddings, circumcisions, political events, and sports competitions. Today, international performance and competition arenas communicate and contribute to the many layers of *pencak silat* cultures. The traditional performance practice of the publicly displayed arts, called *seni (ibingan) pencak silat* and described as a "synthesis of movement and metered music,"[3] features musical accompaniment as an essential element.

In addition to more secular contexts in West Java, there are performance styles of *pencak silat* and related movement arts—such as *rudat*, *kuntulan*, and *sisingaan* (see Figure 5.9)—that have been designed specifically for Muslim contexts. The music of these performance traditions is of a diverse local origin. In this chapter, I will focus on some of these traditions and their particular musical accompaniment while considering the importance of the tripartite interrelationship between Islam, self-defense arts, and music.

Some Thoughts on the Social Role of Self-Defense Arts

The roles of the self-defense arts have been largely explored as providing continuity and change in indigenous and migrant cultures and as part of mental, spiritual, and physical education that strengthens cultural- and social-identity building. The global cultural scope of these arts, however, has been discussed only peripherally. Samudra addresses this challenge and presents the aspect of embodiment, borrowed from Bourdieu's notion of "habitus," as the foundation of the self-defense arts:

> According to Bourdieu (1977, 1990), the 'habitus' is an implicit system of organizing principles that generates a common-sense reality. The 'habitus' also simultaneously produces and is produced by the repetition of similar experiences—'practices'—amongst individuals and the collective. Those experiences which are most embodied (least discursive) are considered by Bourdieu to have the greatest effect in producing a social world which seems 'natural' and 'normal.' (Samudra 2002)

In the popular imagination (as seen in movies and television), however, the social world of self-defense arts is often portrayed as anything but normal, and similar misperceptions have trapped even well-learned scholars. Appadurai, for example, provides a problematic and reductive analysis that depicts the networks and appearances of self-defense practitioners in a way that confuses media fiction with empirical reality:

> The transnational movement of the martial arts, particularly through Asia, as mediated by the Hollywood and Hong Kong film industries (Zarilli 1995) is a rich illustration of the ways in which long-standing martial arts traditions, reformulated to meet the fantasies of contemporary (sometimes lumpen) youth populations, create new cultures of masculinity and violence, which are in turn the fuel for increased violence in national and international politics. Such violence is in turn the spur to an increasingly rapid and amoral arms trade that penetrates the entire world. (Appadurai 1996, 40–41)

Instead of permitting a tendency toward violence, teachers of self-defense schools are often successful in creating positive frameworks in social hot spots. Improving student self-discipline and self-consciousness and instilling an awareness of social responsibility are goals on par with physical fitness objectives. The close teacher-student relationship provides a framework for teachers to evaluate students' social behavior and watch troubled individuals. The average student enrolled in a self-defense school is usually a teenaged male. Conscientious teachers are aware of the potential of emotionally and socially exaggerated behavior of troubled teens; teachers may, in fact, be the most effective people in preventing a teen from sliding into criminal circles. Therefore, schools of self-defense arts actually help prevent youngsters from becoming the criminals that Appadurai assumes. One reason for perceiving martial arts as a moral problem lies in the use of the term "martial." The arts discussed here are, today, no longer in the narrow sense, "martial" arts, although they might be referred to as self-defense arts—or movement arts with an intended function of self-defense.

Pencak Silat in Secular and Muslim Schools

Pencak silat is a rich medium that deals with ethical, social, creative, and physiological concepts through four of its interrelated aspects and corresponding realization forms: self-defense (*aspek bela diri*), art (*aspek seni*), spiritual exercise (*aspek mental spiritual*), and sport (*aspek olahraga*). This outline represents the

modern formulation of *pencak silat*.[4] The relationship between the more secular *pencak silat* schools (*perguruan*) and the more religious schools (i.e., *pesantren* or *pondok pesantren*) can be described as an *adat-agama* (traditional custom-religion) dichotomy (see Harnish in this volume), the latter more often directed toward traditional Muslim circles. A third type of *pencak silat* school in the national education system exists somewhere in between these two, depending on the degree to which the particular school leans toward sacred or secular orientation. Here, as in the *pesantren*-type of school, the main *pencak silat* instructors are often invited from external *perguruan*.[5] There is also a fourth type of *pencak silat* school operating within the executive police and military powers of Indonesia; since it has no direct connections to the arts, it will not be addressed here.[6]

The first three types of *pencak silat* schools are often connected with art performance practice in West Java today (see Figure 5.1). The traditional, transitional, or modern schools of *perguruan*[7] may be organized according to a teacher-student relationship (*guru-murid*), depending on whether or not a teacher or group of teachers utilize autocratic or more discursive methods of instruction. According to traditional (i.e., ceremonial) and modern conventions, both male and female students may be accepted. The school might be adjoined to the regional (IPSI,[8] PPSI[9]) or national (IPSI) union of *pencak silat* schools; some schools are involved with or are members of both organizations. Whereas IPSI is focused on aspects of the national development of the sport and competition aspects of

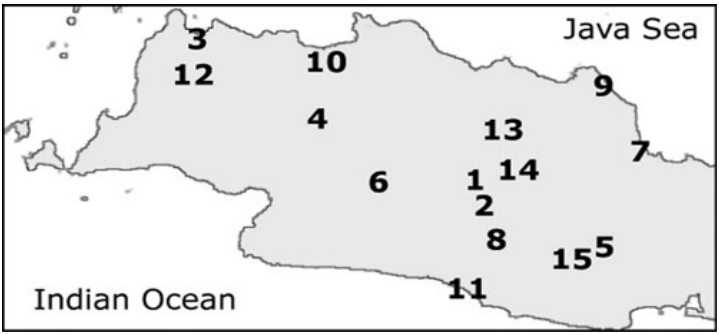

Figure 5.1. Map of Places in West Java, including Banten and Jakarta, cited in this chapter. Legend (in alphabetical order): [1] Bandung, [2] Banjaran, [3] Banten (since 1999: Province of Banten), [4] Bogor, [5] Ciamis, [6] Cianjur, [7] Cirebon, [8] Garut, [9] Indramayu, [10] Jakarta (Special Territory of the Capital of Jakarta), [11] Pameungpeuk (Sub district South Garut), [12] Pandeglang (since 1999: Province of Banten), [13] Subang, [14] Sumedang, [15] Tasikmalaya. (map by author)

pencak silat, PPSI emphasizes local Sundanese arts and culture aspects (*seni budaya*), and its influence is predominantly limited to West Java.

There are numerous Muslim institutions that offer extracurricular *pencak silat* study; hostel or boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*), religious schools (*madrasah*), and Sufi orders or brotherhoods (*tarekat*) all offer *pencak silat* as part of their education programs. *Pesantren* students (*santri*) are expected to join these exercises. Again, the lead teachers of *pencak silat* are primarily from external schools of the *perguruan* type, though certain master teachers may also be found among the *pesantren* staff.[10] In these cases, the *guru-murid* relationship may be characterized as one of charismatic leadership, and this becomes a point of intense debate between Muslim traditionalists and modernists on issues of religious decency. While traditionalists seem to rely on this kind of deep relationship between spiritual teacher and student, modernists feel that the intensity of this relationship might overshadow or distract a student from the study of Islam.

Islam, Music, and Self-Defense Arts in West Java

Music and movement arts are said to have been used as media to attract the local masses and to disseminate Islam throughout West Java in the early days of Islamization. A well-known proverb about the Sundanese town of Cianjur succinctly announces this aspect:

Cianjur ka mashur	Cianjur is famous
ku tilu rupa hal:	because of three things:
Hiji ngaos,	First, the recital of the Qur'an (*ngaos*),
dua mamaos,	second, the singing (*mamaos*),
tilu maén po.	third, the self-defense (*maén po* = *pencak*).

Rasmussen (2005) discusses aspects of Islamic musical aesthetics, including those used in Quranic recitation (*ngaos*), and Soepandi and Atmadibrata (1977, 34–40), van Zanten (1989), and Williams (2001) explore *mamaos*, a form of *tembang Cianjuran* singing. Being a movement art rather than purely aural and oral expression, however, *pencak silat* (*maén po*) has not been thoroughly investigated. Wiradiredja (2005) addresses meaning in each of these three arts but overlooks their points of convergence. From the above proverb, though, it is clear that these arts are interrelated and form a fundamental part of cultural identity for this region. Further, this canon of arts provides an interesting example of how divergent aspects of life—the spiritual experience of prayer, the emotional experience of music, and the ambivalent experience of self-assertion and

self-questioning within the art of self-defense—join forces in an effort to create a greater whole of human experience. With these qualities, the union of the three arts provides a discursive model of spiritual, emotional, and embodied physical dualism—a remarkable feature within the traditional arts of Cianjur.

Mysticism and Spiritual Experience

In West Java, music and movement arts are permissible and useful in certain Muslim institutions, as long as they provide means for an embodied experience of ideas and perceptions based on the teachings of the Qur'an. The resulting spiritual experience is created through the nurturing of inner power (*batin*).[11] *Pencak silat*, an art with self-defense at its core, deals with the physics of the human body to a considerable degree and features action strategies, tactics, and body aesthetics where form follows function. In *pencak silat* teachings within Cianjur Muslim schools, this aspect is conceptualized as *èlmu Asrol*,[12] knowledge regarding the power of physical activity as a catalyst for approaching union with Allah.

For public audiences, the music used in secular *perguruan pencak silat* performances is intended to invoke a state of liveliness (*keramaian*), of alertness, and of controlled harmonic commitment (*penyelarasan*) for both practitioner and observer. Within the more private sphere of Muslim schools, these aspects might also be experienced, but their intentions are somewhat different. The intent of the music here is to produce a positive experience and to help the practitioner mediate powers not experienced in common life. For example a successful practitioner of *pencak silat* should feel invulnerability to pain as well as have complete control over his or her physical body including pulse, breath, and sensitivity to extreme temperature, particularly heat. The resulting experience is intended to be an improvement of self-consciousness under the tenet of spirituality. The musical repertoires performed within *perguruan* versus *pesantren* modalities largely reflect these differing intentions (see Figure 5.11).

I have isolated the respective intentions of the different musical styles to further define them; however, all of these intentions and experiences operate in both secular and religious contexts. No Muslim master teacher of a Sundanese *perguruan* will deny or neglect the role of Islam in the daily work of the school;[13] the ultimate canvas of "habitus" during exercises, greetings, or ceremonies is the will of the Almighty.[14] Even in the most secular, sportive styles of the modern *pencak silat* school, the experienced teacher would agree that beyond body physics and mental processes, certain spiritual abilities are necessary to achieve any kind of mastership in the art. At this point, the master teacher of the *perguruan* and the spiritual leader of the *pesantren* find

their views coinciding. But, they may quickly disagree in considering the benefits of this mental and physical connection, and about the corresponding roles of music during performance.

Historical Outline

The music and movement arts in Muslim contexts have usually been historically depicted as promoting *dakwah*, the duty of Islamic mission, since the days of the *wali sanga*.[15] As media, these arts attracted and invited people to join Muslim religious gatherings in which the word of the Prophet was spread. *Pencak silat*, in particular, gained more prominent status during the late decades of Dutch colonial government. Beginning with the years after the Aceh war (1873–1903), Dutch colonial troops, such as the Marechaussee, received special combat training or *bersilat*, which they adapted as an effective means of defending themselves against Acehnese guerilla fighters in close hand-to-hand combat. In 1915, the Korps Gewapende Politie Hindia-Nederland published a small manual to instruct their troops in this self-defense art. Local teachers of *pencak silat* who were willing to join as instructors were employed. Those not willing were forbidden to keep training and sentenced to jail if they continued to practice; no longer did the Dutch colonial government regard self-defense movement forms as "innocent popular entertainment" (Kartodirdjo 1966, 197ff.). Officials recognized *perguruan pencak silat* as local sites of subversive nationalist activities, and, partially for this reason, the traditional presentation of the art form, *ibing pencak*, and its musical accompaniment, *kendang pencak*, were banned and disappeared from public stages in West Java.

In this situation, the long-established Islamic institutions such as *pesantren* that 1) were accessible to all Indonesian Muslims for both youth and adult education, and 2) remained the only mass organizations not under prohibition, became important centers of resistance. Camouflaged as prayer exercises, *pencak* was absorbed into a movement art called *rudat*, often defined as an acronym of *meniru adat*—"to pretend to practice local customs."[16] The music of the frame drum ensembles *terbangan*, *genjringan*, and *gembyung* supported this facade of religious practice in a twofold manner: first, by obscuring exercises performed by members of the praying community through chanting religious melodies and frame drumming, and second, by using the music to attract those in the local public who knew the real reason for joining the praying congregation. A more daring variant of this kind of hidden exercise was *kuntulan*,[17] which developed in the areas of Cirebon and Indramayu. Instead of the seated position used for some exercises, practitioners actually kneeled on one leg with right leg flat and left leg upright primed for movement. This type of body position is used for hand, arm, and

body-lock exercises. As with *rudat* above, *genjringan* ensemble music was used as accompaniment for *kuntulan* to suggest to the Dutch oppressors that this exercise was a harmless ritual of simple religious chanting (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

Though Kunst (1934) gave detailed organological accounts of many musical instruments used in these ensembles, the fact that contextual functions were not part of ethnomusicological focus in the early 20th century may explain why these arts received limited attention from ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists for decades. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1960, 155ff.) was probably the first to recognize the relationship between *terbangan* and *gambusan* (an ensemble featuring *gambus* lute, see Berg in this volume) music and "*pentjak*" movement art within Central Javanese *pondok* and *pesantren* culture, describing it as a controversial topic between traditionalists and modernists. He (Ibid, 158) states:

> In sum: the *terbangan*, the *gambusan*, and the *pentjak* combine to define a quite variant subcultural art style by means of which the austere simplicities of Islam are modified for those for whom religion needs to be more than faith and works and to whom time is more than money.

Figure 5.2. A group of *kuntulan* performers, directed by Pak Cecep Suherman BP, from a *pesantren* of the Cirebon area during a "movement suite" (*jurus*) presentation. Sitting behind them are six *genjring* frame drum players. Behind these players, other musicians with their instruments (*kendang, bedug,* etc.) are pausing. Bandung, during the "1st Congregation Festival of the IPSI West Java" (1. Apel Besar IPSI JaBar), 1990. (photo by author)

Figure 5.3. A group of *kuntulan* performers, also directed by Pak Cecep Suherman BP, from the PPS Sabhura school of Cirebon preparing for a "27 movements suite" (*jurus* 27) presentation. Sitting behind them, a group of pausing musicians of the Gembyung Gunung Jati, standing behind these, five *genrjing* frame-drum players, and one *dog-dog* barrel drum player can be observed. Cirebon, Siti Inggil yard of Kasepuhan palace, 1994. (photo by author)

Though the *gambusan* ensemble mentioned here has direct relations neither with *terbangan* nor with *pencak silat* in West Java, Geertz leads our perception to two points I want to stress here. The first point is his quite coherent view of the arts of the *pondok* and *pesantren* culture in Central Java of that time. Particularly in understanding relationships in Muslim contexts, he was one of the first scholars who opened up a wider horizon for the scope and relevance of what activists nowadays in Java and elsewhere call "*pencak silat* culture" (*kebudayaan pencak silat*) or "world of *silat*" (*dunia silat*). The second point refers to an important issue: why a lively (*ramai*) atmosphere during music and movement arts performances in Central Javanese *pondok* and *pesantren* of that time would be observed. This reason simply is that these arts contributed to the entertainment of the usually young, male students gathered in such institutions. These arts did a good deal to make religious life more enjoyable; they had the potency to enrich young male religious lives through experiences of emotional and spiritual

affection—or *Innigkeit*, to use a German term here—through compassionate chanting of inspiring songs, experiencing embodiment through movement arts and their inherent physical virtue, or experiencing enchanting string instrument sounds while playing a *gambus* lute.

Some years later, several Indonesian scholars, including Soepandi and Atmadibrata (1976), were also well aware of the social meanings, functions, and implications of music and movement arts. These aspects still can be observed today, though sometimes in different settings, as I will discuss in the following section.

Perceptions of Music and Self-Defense Movement Arts

It is essential to explore how Muslim communities view these movement and music arts, and to consider them from Indonesian Islamic perspectives. Traditionally oriented Muslims situate these arts into a center-periphery model, while modernists regard them with general suspicion. Some of these arts were formed and grew explicitly from and within traditional religious *agama* contexts (the center); other arts, however, were pre-patterned by traditional social *adat* and coincided less directly with Islamic contexts (the periphery).

From a choreological point of view, there are movement arts that take content, style and texture explicitly from Islamic sources, for example the *rudat alif* of the Cirebon area, which derives letters and words from the Qur'an through body calligraphies based on, or derived from, *pencak silat*-related movement vocabulary.[18] Some arts, like *kuntulan* from the Cirebon and Indramayu areas, are styles of *pencak silat* that were contextually and musically inspired by Islam; other movement arts developed largely from traditional contexts of *pencak silat* that were reorganized within Muslim ceremonial contextual arts, for example the major parts of the movement vocabulary of the *sisingaan* form (see Figure 5.9) found in the Subang area.

Similar issues exist within the music accompanying these movement forms. There are music genres such as *gembyung* from Cirebon that were inspired from ideas deriving from necessities of traditional ceremonial Muslim contexts, and non-Islamic music genres such as the *kendang pencak* ensemble in the *sisingaan* ceremony that underwent Islamic reinterpretations of meaning.[19] Instrumentation easily distinguishes these types of genres, such as the presence or absence of leading melodic instruments (in particular, the *tarompet* double-reed aerophone, see Figures 5.7 and 5.8) or vocal singing.

What may be, or may have been, acceptable to a Muslim community at a certain time in history may not be acceptable at other times. Suryadi (1983, 20) gives a historical account of the local perception of the *seni terebang* ensemble in

the Sumedang region. He asserts that the ensemble fell into disfavor around 1950 and was severely criticized in Muslim circles for being used within non-Islamic *sasajèn* (pre-Islamic offering) ceremonies. It was revived in 1956 after disputes on its appropriateness to religious prescription subsided. The ensemble was renamed *gembyung,* and the number of frame drums in the ensemble was reduced from five to four.

Suryadi's account of *seni terebang/gembyung* is just one telling example of a persisting controversy. Critics among Muslim modernists, such as those from the reformist organization Muhammadiyah, have long been opposed to certain movement and music arts practices within Sundanese Islamic institutions. Some voices resist the modernists. Khisbiyah (2006, 393), for example, argues against the modernists' rather undifferentiated perception of traditional local arts and their culture. She states, "The self esteem of the Muhammadiyah community towards the arts culture rather gives reverence towards Arab culture, which is supposed to be the culture of Islam, than towards local culture, which is supposed to dishonor the 'purity of Islam' through the prolongation of animism and paganism."[20]

The thick interrelationships between Muslim institutions and *pencak silat* performance contexts rely, first, on the more traditionalist Muslim communities around Nahdlatul Ulama (which operates many *pesantren*) and Sufi brotherhoods or circles (*tarekat*). The focus of performance emphasizes the movement arts rather than the music arts. For this reason, performances are commonly addressed by the name of their movement art subgenre or performance mode, as in *rudat sesuci* or its more common genre name *rudat*, and not by the name of its particular musical accompaniment. Muslim modernists have found it problematic when physical self-defense exercises—such as the *pencak silat* forms *rudat* and *kuntulan* or the traditional wrestling art called *benjang*—appear wrapped up in mixed performances with other physical action arts, like *debus*, which emphasize exercises of invulnerability (*kekebalan*; see Figure 5.9) rather than Sufi-related esoteric or secret spiritual knowledge (*èlmu Asrol*). Here, the demand for the Muslim traditionalist's mystic experience collides with the more rationalist attitudes of the Muslim modernist.

Music Ensembles, Repertoires, and Performance Practices

All music ensemble types discussed in the analysis that follows are multipurpose in character. None is solely connected with Muslim ceremonial contexts and this problematizes modernist perceptions of these musics. It is with little wonder that these multi-contextual Islamic music arts were suspect and that the modernist Muslim community was reluctant to embrace them. From an organological perspective,

music ensembles found in Muslim performance contexts of *pencak silat* and related movement arts in West Java are mainly of two types: 1) ensemble types based on frame drums, and 2) ensemble types based on the single-headed drum *bedug*. Within the first group, we find the subtypes *genjringan*, *terbangan*, and *gembyung*.

Genjringan

In the Cirebon and Garut area, the *genjringan* is a type of frame drum ensemble used within village processions (*helaran*, *arak-arakan*) to accompany events throughout the cycle of the Muslim calendar. This ensemble accompanies praises and processions honoring the Prophet's ascension to heaven through mystical contemplation (*Isra Mi'raj Nabi Muhammad*),[21] as well as processions during circumcision rituals (*hajatan sunat*). *Genjringan* groups accompany *pencak silat* and related movement arts such as *rudat*, or action arts featuring exercises of invulnerability (*kekebalan*), such as *pecutan* (whip duel) and *sampyong* (duel with rattan sticks). Kusnara gives a report on the development of the (*tari*) *rudat*:

> …In West Java, this dance developed in the *Pesantren* as a pastime for the *santri*. While singing songs of praise (*Pupujian*) of the Almighty God, they dance with *Penca(k) Silat* movements. The dance further developed, and was suited by a music accompaniment of the *Terbangan/Genjringan*. The dance is executed by men, but in certain regions, like Indramayu and Pandeglang, it can be found danced by women also. (…) The *tari Rudat* developed, besides elsewhere, in the vicinities of Banten and Cirebon (the centers of the development of Islam). From there, it spread further to the vicinities of Subang, Banjaran, Ciamis, Tasik, and Garut. (1984, 7–8)

A combination of drums in the *genjring dogdog* ensemble accompanies the *kuntulan* movement art, a particular style of *pencak silat* from the areas of Cirebon and Indramayu.[22] It consists of eight hand-beaten *genjring*[23] frame drums of different size and pitch, and two conical, single-headed drums called *dogdog*, beaten with sticks. The *genjring* and *dogdog* musicians also sing, though additional singers (*juru suara* or *juru alok*) may join in. Further instruments, such as the single-headed drum called *bedug* or the idiophone *kecrek*, are optional. On the *genjring*, three pairs of thin metal plates or cymbals (*anting-anting*) made of tin or brass fastened to each frame are an organological feature and provide a special timbre. The *genjring* thus provides a more brilliant, lively, and louder sound than the *terbang* and *gembyung*, which both lack metal plates. The drums perform rhythmic patterns that are metrical and repetitive. Interlocking parts are played on the *genjring*, but are not prominent among the din of the sound texture.

The vocal part features monophonic structures, or responsorial monophonic structures, between a singer and a unison choir. The vocal repertoire is taken from religious *sholawatan* ("prayer") songs in Arabic or in a combination of local and Arabic languages, and religiously appropriate parts of the *lagu rakyat daerah* (regional songs) in local language. Typical songs performed from the *sholawatan* repertoire are "Sholawat Choliqul bashyar," "Sholawat Tarbiya," "Sholawat Nabi," or "Sholawat Badar," while those from the *lagu rakyat daerah* repertoire include "Rukun Islam Rukun Imam," "Tamba Ati," "Sorong Dayung," or "Ayun Ambing." Both repertoires are considered to derive from the Sundanese tuning models *laras salendro*, *pelog*, and *sorog/madenda*.[24]

Terbangan

The *terbangan* ensemble consists of three to five frame drums of the *terbang* type, without attached metal cymbals. Optional instruments include the membranophones *bedug*, *kendang*, and *kulanter*, as well as the idiophone *kecrek* and the double-reed aerophone, *tarompet* (discussed in more detail below). *Terbangan* subgenres are numerous, and further details of instrumentation, timbre, and performance practice are determined according to the particular subgenre.[25] It can be said, however, that *terbangan* is the most common music ensemble found in connection with *pondok pesantren*, *madrasah*, and *tarekat* institutions in West Java. According to Suryadi (1983, 17), the name "*ter(e)bang*" etymologically is derived from "to raise, to fly" (*terbang*) because its music was traditionally intended solely for transporting one's soul to the Seventh Heaven of Islam, to God the Creator (*Tuhan Yang Maha Kuasa*).

Terbangan in the Garut area relates to *pencak silat* through connections with the performance practice of *rudat*. Though appearing to be the workhorse of the Islamic music arts discussed, *terbangan* also provides nuances in performance practice that require broader interpretation in order to relate to Muslim contexts. For example, when considering the use of *terbangan* in ceremonies with incense offerings (*sasajèn*) and the reciting of *mantra* (such as the *lagu* "Kidung Sangara") as reported by Kurniasih (1984, 11f.), a very broad interpretation is required to deem this performance as Islamic. In addition to these contexts, *terbangan* is found in *debus* performances, especially in Banten and Southern Garut.

The most important musical element of the performance practice here is not the rhythmical patterns, but rather the religiously inspired singing. Formally distinguished rhythmical patterns (*irama*) coincide with the verse. Kusnara differentiates successive slow tempo/rhythm (*irama anca*) and fast tempo/rhythm (*irama kering*) patterns in *Rudat* of the Garut area, as well as three functionally different repertoires of songs: opening songs (*lagu pembukaan*), performance

songs (*lagu pertunjukkan*), and entertainment songs (*lagu hiburan*) (1984, 14, 20–27). Performance songs are the only type used in *rudat* and (occasionally) in *debus*. Musical details of the repertoires of *lagu pembukaan* and *lagu pertunjukkan* coincide in part with those of the *genjringan* ensemble, where melodies are taken from prayers (*sholawatan*), religious advices (*nadoman*), and songs of praise (*pupujian*). The entertainment songs (*lagu hiburan*) are taken from the local *lagu rakyat daerah* repertoire. Tunings are again believed to derive from Sundanese *laras salendro*, *pelog*, *degung*, and *madenda*. However, the articulation and intonation of singing in both *terbangan* and *genjringan* suggests Middle Eastern influence, and similar ensemble types can be found in many Muslim communities both in and outside Indonesia.

Gembyung

There are two general types of *gembyung* ensemble genres[26] discussed here: a Cirebon type and Sumedang/Garut type, each distinguished by their locale. First, there is the *gembyung* connected with the Muslim communities in Cirebon, and especially with the tomb of Sunan Gunung Jati. Second, there are other genres historically stemming from the first type outside of this local context that differ in instrumentation, repertoire, and performance context from the Cirebon type.

The Sumedang/Garut drum ensemble consists of four *gembyung* frame drums, a double-headed drum called *kendang*, a smaller double-headed drum called *kulanter*, two large and small hanging gongs (*goong* and *kempul*, respectively), an idiophone called *kecrek*, and the double-reed *tarompet*. Musicians who play the percussion instruments also sing. Repertoire is taken from prayer songs (*sholawatan*), poems about the life of the Prophet (*kitab Barzanzi*), or traditional Sundanese lyrics in *sisindiran* four-line verse form.

To my knowledge, the Sumedang/Garut ensemble is not connected with any kind of *pencak silat* or related performance practice. This differs from the Cirebon type of *gembyung*. Because the main performance contexts of the *gembyung* at the tomb of Sunan Gunung Jati[27] are religious ceremonies from the Muslim calendar and those based on remembrance of the saint's Islamic deeds, the personnel of the ensemble consists of a special group of *santri* (*pesantren* residents) who are in charge of the maintenance of the tombs at Gunung Jati. Ambary notes that:

> The graves are guarded by a religious group consisting of descendants of sailors in the navy of Adipati Keling, whose ships ran aground on the shore of Cirebon in the early sixteenth century. This group is still organized as a group of sailors led by a captain. Guard duty is allocated like watches on a ship, using special nautical terms. The head of this

> group is called the *Jeneng*. His staff is in charge of the daily care of the tomb; its members must also take care of visiting pilgrims. (…) Besides the quarters of the *Jeneng* and his staff there is a mosque in the precinct, headed by a *penghulu* who is assisted by a staff of 12 mosque personnel. The *Jeneng*, the *bekel tua*, *bekel anom*, *kraman* and *penghulu* may in addition to their duties in the tomb precinct, be ordered by the Kasepuhan or the Kanoman to fulfill special duties at the palace. (1982, 90–91)

The *gembyung* at Gunung Jati is of utmost historical interest. It is significant to the development of music and Islam in West Java because the saint himself allegedly initiated it in the 15th/16th century, which would make it the oldest existing Indonesian ensemble form of Sufi-Islamic music.[28] According to local history, this *gembyung* became the model for later music ensembles used in the Islamic mission of West Java; more importantly, Sunan Gunung Jati himself is said to have instructed five *santri* from Cirebon to spread the word of Islam by using this music art as a medium. The names and tombs of these five *santri* are still known: Eyang Sacapati, whose grave can be found in Naluk village in the Cimalaka District; Eyang Madapati, Eyang Jayapati and Eyang Mayapati, who are said to be buried in Citimbun village; and, finally, Eyang Wangsakusumah/Wangsarudin, who is said to be buried in Kadujajar village in the District of Tanjungkerta. Apparently their work of *dakwah* (bringing people to Islam) existed in the area between Cirebon and Sumedang, which supports the local opinion that the Sumedang/Garut type of *gembyung* developed after the Cirebon type.

The Cirebon type of *gembyung* consists of five frame drums of different sizes: a small *gembyung alit*, three medium-sized *gembyung*, and a large *gembyung pengageng*. Also included are a large drum (*bedug*) and an idiophone (*kecrek*), often replaced with a *genjring* frame drum with cymbals. The number of frame drums is significant and directly related to the *Rukun Islam* or the Five Pillars of Islam. The rhythmical patterns performed are quite different from those of other frame drum ensembles discussed. The drums are tuned to five different pitches that in performance produce the repetitive colotomic formal structure and well-organized interlocking melodic technique similar to the tuned percussion found in regional *gamelan* ensembles. The song repertoire is again taken from the *sholawatan* in Arabic and from the *lagu rakyat daerah* in mixed Arabic and local Cirebonese languages. The tuning models used for both the singing and the drumming are, once again, clearly based on West Javanese *laras salendro*, *pelog*, and *sorog/madenda*.

Just as the *gembyung* from Cirebon is said to have a historic relationship to Sunan Gunung Jati, a similar historic connection is said to exist between certain *pencak silat*-related movement arts and a legendary figure and pioneer

of Islam in Cirebon, Prince Walangsungsang. Certain elements of the Prince's "Inner Power" training are said to have been passed on to his followers,[29] and might still be employed in arts like *silat jurus rasa* ("silat moves of inner feeling"), *pecutan* (whip duel), and *sampyong* (duel with rattan sticks).[30] Songs for each of these genres may include "Sholawat Choliqul bashyar," "Tamba Ati," and "Rukun Imam Rukun Islam." This unique historical parallel may provide a thread between the music of *gembyung* and the movement and action arts (see Figure 5.4).

Rampak Bedug

In addition to frame drum-based ensembles, those built around single-headed drums such as the *rampak bedug* (respectively *adu bedug* or *bajidoran*) appear prominently as musical accompaniment in the Banten area. The ensemble consists of at least eight single-headed *bedug* drums approximately 55 centimeters in diameter, about 90 cm in depth, and positioned on x-crossed

Figure 5.4. Three *silat jurus rasa* performers, directed by Pak Cecep Suherman BP, from the PPS Sabhura school. Sitting behind them, musicians of the Gembyung Gunung Jati can be observed. Standing behind these, a pausing *genjring dog-dog* ensemble is to be seen. Cirebon, Siti Inggil yard of Kasepuhan palace, 1994. (photo by author)

racks that hold the drum at the head level of the standing performer. The *bedug* are played with thick wooden mallets, approximately 3 centimeters in diameter and 40 cm in length. In addition, two somewhat smaller *dogdog* drums, usually two medium-sized *terbang* or *genjring* frame drums, and, occasionally, a set of bamboo idiophones called *angklung* are also used. Vocal performance practice is derived from the religious *sholawatan*, *nadoman*, and *pupujian* repertoires. The exceptions to these Muslim songs are embedded elements from *beluk*, traditional Javanese and West Javanese high-pitched, high-tensioned chanting. *Rampak bedug* is used for ceremonies in accordance with the Muslim calendar, such as *Idul Fitri* (marking the end of Ramadan) and *Idul Adha* (commemorating God's forgiveness of Ibrahim). This ensemble is connected to *pencak silat* in a peculiar way: Male musicians perform their drumming in highly stylized choreographed movements in unison from the art of self-defense (see Figure 5.5). Female members, if they are group members, do not typically follow these movements.

Figure 5.5. Two *rampak bedug* performers, directed by Pak Haji Ari Sudewo, from the Pandeglang area during a presentation. Note the arm and hand movements of the drummers, performing stylized *pencak silat* movements while beating the *bedug* drums with two decorated sticks each. Bandung, during the "1st Congregation Festival of the IPSI West Java" (1. Apel Besar IPSI JaBar), 1990. (photo by author)

Muslim and Syncretic Spiritual Connotations within Secular Performance Practice

Both frame and single-headed drum ensembles discussed above relate to the concept of *dakwah*, because they are primarily used during performances within religious ceremonies and group practices. Melodic repertoire paired with drum ensembles differs from genre to genre, though two overriding aspects are clearly maintained. First, melodic repertoire taken from religious sources dominates. More secular folk song repertoire (*lagu rakyat daerah*) may be included in performances, as long as the sung texts do not conflict with Islamic teachings. The songs meld religious ambitions with regional or local identities and help reinforce local acceptance. Second, the rhythmic forms used consist of short repetitive patterns, which provide a continuum of rhythmic sound for the display of the movement arts and the sung religious message. Particular and dominating rhythmic accents (e.g., dramatic accents caused by complementary interaction with *pencak silat* performers) are omitted. Interlocking structures differ from genre to genre: The *genjringan* is dynamically almost equilibrant and only features a rotating sound texture in which interlocking is virtually inaudible. However, interlocking patterns are clearly heard in the Cirebon-type *gembyung*. Lying somewhere in between these two is the sound texture of the *terbangan*. These drum ensemble types support a series of genres related to Muslim culture expressed as the "... kinds of folk arts invigorated by a breath of Islam."[31] For the traditionally oriented Muslim, these fall near the center of the center-periphery model.

These practices and repertoires differ from a third ensemble type (after those based on frame drums and *bedug*) centered on the double-headed *gendang/kendang* drum, which omits sung vocal parts. *Gendang patingtung*, for instance, is an instrumental drum ensemble used within the *pencak silat* and *debus* of the Banten area, and *kendang pencak*, as used for *pencak silat*, features additional instruments within the *sisingaan* (circumcision procession).[32] In these genres, vocal parts are absent except for rhythmic vocal interjections (*alok*) and fiery shouts (*senggak*) from drummers, the player of the *goong*, or members of the audience; instead, the end-blown aerophone *tarompet* provides the melody. Particularly within the *kendang pencak*'s secular performance context, explicit and sometimes dramatic rhythmic accents and interlocking patterns are prominent both in the form structures (*tepak*) played by the *kendang indung* (larger, "mother" drum) and in the ad hoc "dialogues" between the *kendang anak* (smaller, "child" drum) player and the *pencak silat* performer.[33]

During religious ceremonies, the instrumental *tarompet* melodies are borrowed both from regional folk songs (*lagu rakyat daerah*) and from the prominent religious repertoire called *lagu agama*. Certain melodies stemming from regional

secular dance genres are excluded from the religious performance context. For example, the repertoire from the often-erotic music and dance genre, *jaipongan*, and that of its antecedent, *ketuk tilu*, are not played. These repertoires, however, may appear in secular *pencak silat* performance contexts. It is also noteworthy that I never experienced *lagu agama* within secular contexts.[34] I conclude that the selection of melodic repertoire provides a clear criterion for a division between the use of music ensembles discussed above in religious ceremonies, on the one hand, and secular contexts on the other.

These *kendang*-based ensemble types are marginal within Muslim performance contexts, and they are mainly used within *adat* culture. Lacking the vocal element and therefore the potential to spread the word, these music ensembles would seem to lack the aesthetic features for the Muslim contexts discussed. Nevertheless, one usually will find an enlarged *kendang pencak* group within the *sisingaan* procession of a Muslim circumcision ceremony in the Subang area, which is an event of utmost importance (see Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6. Master performer Asep Gurwawan, from the HPS Panglipur Pamagersari school of Bandung, presents a "movement suite with double fan" (*jurus kipas dua*). Behind him sit four musicians of the school's *kendang pencak* ensemble. School director: Pak Haji Uho Holidin. Bandung, Padepokan Siliwangi gym, 1994. (photo by author)

Ensembles resembling *kendang pencak* can be observed in distinct performance contexts that have some ties with *pencak silat* but seemingly few with Muslim performance traditions. These movement arts contexts include *adu domba* (ram fighting with spiritual support from *pencak silat* fighters), *cador* (burlesque clownery partially based on *pencak silat* movements), *kuda silat* (horse-taming by a *pencak silat* fighter), and *kuda renggong* (horse and *pencak silat* fighters dancing together). Through a process of reinterpretation, the pre-Islamic elements in these performance arts are relabeled as Islamic; this new understanding results in an indivisible mixture of both Muslim and pre-Muslim meanings for these arts.

This kind of symbolic (re)interpretation was a fascinating topic of discussion between two leaders that I met in the field in 1995: the late Ibu Nani R. Sukeja (1943–1996) and Pak Muchtar D.S. (1943–2004),[35] one of the major *tarompet* aerophone players in *kendang pencak* performance during the 1980s and 1990s in Bandung. Both were quick to articulate how organological details of the *tarompet* relate to certain symbolic spiritual meanings, and both discussed music performance details of the whole *kendang pencak* within the immediate, not explicitly Muslim, *pencak silat* performance practice.

According to their discussion, the upper part of the *tarompet* consisting of the cheek-holder and the double-reed is called "moon and star" (*bulan dan bintang*) or "peak of the mosque" (*munara masigit*), because these two parts closely resemble the form of the fundamental Muslim symbol of half moon and star. The instrument has a total of nine holes: seven tuning holes, an entrance, and an escape hole for breath. Both Sukeja and Muchtar interpreted these holes in relation to features of Islam: the seven playing holes stand for the seventh member of the *wali sanga*, Sunan Kalijaga, the *wali* credited with using the existing arts as media for the then new teaching of Islam. The ninth hole of the *tarompet*, used for blowing into the instrument, symbolizes the ninth *wali sanga*, Sunan Gunung Jati, regarded as the most important of the *wali* for West Java. His "voice" comes from the mosque (*masigit*), and he gave Islamic "breath" to the other *wali*. The double reed (*empet*) of the instrument consists of several parts: the reed (*baralak kalapa*) itself, the feather shaft (*buluh ayam*) to which the reed is attached, and the white thread (*benang putih*) that holds both together. All three parts are fastened to form an attachment to the mouthpiece (*palet*). The reed symbolizes the coconut tree, useful to humankind in all its parts. The feather shaft symbolizes the principle of human life (*panghurip*) and gives life when human breath flows through the instrument, and humans in turn receive breath from the Almighty, mediated by Sunan Gunung Jati. The white thread symbolizes the thread of life (*tali ara-ara)*, itself consisting of five interwoven white threads (*lima benang putih*) used to tie off the umbilical cord during birth.

This five-fold binding is conceived to have a direct symbolic relationship to the "Four Siblings" (*Dulur Anu Opat*) of man, which are united within "the Fifth,

the Center" (*Kalima Pancer*).[36] Located in the lower center of the human body, it arises to the sphere of God in search of the Higher Being. The mouthpiece finally keeps and organizes the white thread, and correspondingly, the relations of the *Dulur Anu Opat Kalima Pancer*. All these attributes culminate at the end of the instrument when human breath is released as sound through the eighth hole, the cone of the *tarompet* (see Figures 5.7 and 5.8).

Sukeja and Muchtar further elaborated on *tarompet* symbols and extended these to the *kendang pencak* performance practice as a whole. For example, the Sundanese term *tepak* for the rhythmic patterns played by the ensemble is derived from the term used when giving somebody a light slap with an open hand for admonition. In this way, the two drums used to execute a *tepak* mutually perform a sign of direction where neither strays from harmonic commitment to one another (*penyelarasan*). The goal of this mutual admonition is to achieve this state

Figure 5.7. Two double-reed *tarompet* aerophones from Bandung. The simpler instrument on the left uses a cheek-holder made from plastic; the better instrument on the right uses a cheek-holder made from coconut shell. (photo by author)

Figure 5.8. Details of the cheek-holder, palet, made from coconut shell, and the double-reed, *empet*, of a *tarompet* from Bandung. When assembled, the parts are called "moon and star" (*bulan dan bintang*). (photo by author)

of harmonic commitment. Not only do both *kendang* players keep one another in line, they give attention to *pencak silat* performer's (*pesilat*) actions and movements, who must also be kept in harmonic commitment through particular *tepak* pattern rhythmic accents. Patterns help prevent performers from falling into a state of combat or aggressive trance (*kesurupan*). Since the movement techniques are rooted in self-defense, violence can easily erupt unless *tepak* is used effectively. In addition, the musical framework should support the beauty of a performer's presentation. Finally, the movement sequences of the *pencak silat* performers are delimited by the gong, *goong penca* (or *bende*). The *goong*, through its unique sound quality, contributes higher spiritual value and transforms the whole of the performance because it is regarded as being able to establish a connection to the Higher Being. To clarify this point, Ibu Nani R. Sukeja circumscribed its particular sonic quality with a Sundanese saying: "*Goong ngungkeun luhur panggung*" or "the *goong* sounds to the Higher Being from the stage." The "Higher Being," in this case, was explicated as Allah and God the Almighty (*Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*).

Recent developments

The days of undercover *pencak silat* training alongside prayer services in West Javanese Muslim *pesantren* are long gone.[37] The need to use these arts as media

for *dakwah* has diminished considerably in today's society, which is, at least nominally, 90% Muslim. Having supported Muslim communities for a long time, these arts, invigorated by a "breath of Islam," appear within ceremonies of the Muslim calendar (i.e., *Idul Fitri*, *Idul Adha, Maulid,* and *Isra Mi'raj Nabi Muhammad*). They also serve life cycle rites (e.g., weddings, circumcisions) and ceremonies honoring local and national historical spiritual leaders, for example the Memorial of Sunan Gunung Jati at his *Astana* tomb in Cirebon. In addition, these movement and action arts demonstrate knowledge and control of inner power (*batin/tenaga dalam*) and superior body abilities (*kekebalan*) gained through modalities of—at least ostensibly—Muslim spiritual dedication, and they function in more common secular events, such as the Republic's anniversary day on the 17th of August.

Recent work from Mustappa (2004)[38] and Nunung (2004), and earlier accounts from Dendabrata (1992) all indicate a decline and undeniable crisis for some of the regionally limited arts, which are falling into disuse in their common ceremonial contexts; this especially applies to some arts in the Cirebon area. One of my colleagues from Bandung raised the following point: Developments from *pesantren* circles of *pencak silat*, the related movement arts, and the musical styles historically made their impact on the growth of both Islam and the nation. But, what is their impact on cultural development today?[39]

Pak Cecep M. Suherman BP (b. 1937), master teacher of the *Perguruan Pencak Silat Sabhura*,[40] provides an example of how concepts from Islamic institutions, *pencak silat*, and music performance can manifest in practice. For decades, Pak Cecep has run a small but effective center in the district of Kesambi in Cirebon, vigorously pursuing two main goals for youth education: first, to provide education in life skills (*kecakapan hidup*) for male and female street children, and for deaf or socially disturbed youths to make small-scale handicrafts for their daily income; second, to offer education in *pencak silat* self-defense, *genjringan* music, and other creative arts to improve their mental and social stability and self-consciousness. In August 2005, approximately 240 youths from tsunami-affected areas in Aceh and Nias were sent by the Indonesian Department for National Education to his center (the "Peoples' Training Activities Center" [PKBM = *Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat,* "*Gajah Mada*"])[41] to receive training as junior instructors in both life skills and creative arts. Handicraft products have been traded, depending on the kind and scale of activity, either by the apprentices themselves locally or via the PKBM center. Interregional and even some international contacts have been established. Being a dedicated Muslim, Pak Cecep gains life energy from his mission. Though he has strong ties to both the Cirebon *pesantren* culture and the *Kraton Kasepuhan* (the royal court of Sultan Kasepuhan),

he does not use an Islamic label for his center and regards himself as having a more secular, social, and socio-spiritual responsibility. His son Opan has joined the activities in recent years, and helps run the center of his father, the "Handicraft - *pencak silat* Master" ("*Si Pendekar Yang Pengrajin*").

Summary

In its art form (*seni*), the traditional *pencak silat* of West Java relies on music as one of its essential elements for the enrichment of public performances. The music

Adu Domba	Ram fighting with spiritual support from pencak silat fighters, found in the Parahyangan area (the mountainous interior of West Java).
Cador	Acronym from "penca" and "bodor"; burlesque clownery partially based on pencak silat movements, mainly found around Bandung.
Debus	Spiritually rooted physical exercises focused on the achievement of invulnerability (kekebalan), found in Sufi tarekat contexts in many Islamic parts of Indonesia.
Kuda Renggong	Performance form of pencak silat in the Sumedang area in which pencak silat fighters and a horse "dance" together.
Kuda Silat	Pencak silat performance form in the Sumedang in which a pencak silat fighter tries to tame a horse.
Kuntulan	Performance form or style of pencak silat in Cirebon and Indramayu, nurtured within pesantren circles.
Pencat Silat	Movement and self-defense art combining self-defense, art, spiritual exercise, and sport. The composite name, "pencak silat" is recent and derives from Central Java/West Java and Sumatran terms; it was articulated to promote a national Indonesian identity.
(Movement Arts Related to Pencak Silat)	Contributing forms: Penca, ulin, maenpo (synonyms), pukulan (all West Java); silat, gayung (Sumatra and Malaysia); kuntai (Sino-Indonesian). I generally use "pencak silat" to avoid confusion in this chapter.
Pecutan	Whip duel, executed by trained pencak silat fighters.
Rudat	Movement art depicting deeds of saints or forming words from the Qur'an by body calligraphies of letters from the Arabic alphabet, developed from Pesantren circles and partially based on pencak silat movements.
Sampyong	Duel with rattan sticks, executed by trained pencak silat fighters.
Silat Jurus Rasa	Form of pencak silatin Cirebon focusing on inner power (tenagadalam)
Sisingaan	Circumcision procession of Subang area and elsewhere. Dance and procession movements partially based on pencak silat.

Figure 5.9. Table of short descriptions of movement arts cited in this chapter.

a) Music Ensemble Type:	Gembyung Cirebonan	Genjringan /Genjring Dogdog	Terbangan	Rampak Bedug	Gendang Patingtung	Kendang Pencak
b) Muslim Contexts:	Calendrical rites; rites related to Sunan Gunung Jati: Silat Jurus Rasa	Calendrical processions; Isra Mi'raj Nabi Muhammad; circumcision rites: Rudat, Kuntulan	Calendrical rites; religious chant congregations: Rudat	Circumcision rites; (Idul Fitri, Idul Adha, etc.): drummers do Pencak Silat	Circumcision rites: Pencak Silat Seni	Sisingaan processions: movements partially based on Pencak Silat
c) Other Contexts:	(none)	Pecutan, Sampyong	Incense offerings (sasajèn), Debus	National socio-political-spiritual events (e.g. Independence Day)	Pencak Silat Seni, Debus	Pencak Silat Seni, Adu Domba, Cador, Kuda Silat, Kuda Renggong
d) Local Occurrence of (b) and (c):	(b) Cirebon, (c) (none)	(b, c) Cirebon, Indramayu, Garut area	(b, c) Garut area	(b, c) Banten area	(b, c) Banten area	(b) Subang area; (c) areas of West Java, Banten & Jakarta

Figure 5.10. Table showing the correlations between a) music ensemble types w/ connections to movement arts, b) ceremonial Muslim contexts, c) other ceremonial or performative contexts, and d) local occurrence in West Java as cited in this chapter.

genres used are heterogeneous and can roughly be distinguished organologically according to their use of various types of percussion instruments, as well as the presence or absence of leading melodic instruments. Socially, they can be distinguished according to their more secular or more Islamic-influenced settings. In both cases, *pencak silat* is entrenched in society because of long-standing histories that have produced an interdependency between art and function. However, a major point of distinction exists between secular and Islamic song repertoires, which range from secular local folk songs (*lagu rakyat daerah*) to religious prayer songs (*sholawatan*). The selection of melody from a given repertoire, therefore, provides a clear criterion for a division between the use of music ensembles in religious ceremonies on the one hand, and secular contexts on the other. Similarly, there is a preference for short and repetitive rhythmic patterns providing a continuum-like sound texture within the Muslim-oriented performance contexts, and a preference for rhythmic patterns structured by interlocking and accent techniques within the more secular-oriented performance contexts.

In Muslim communities of West Java, two main forms of music ensemble types are used within *pencak silat* performances: frame drum-based ensembles (*genjringan*,

Repertoires of *perguruan* performance contexts in West Java:	**Repertoires of *pesantren* performance contexts in West Java:**
"Old *penca(k)* songs" (*lagu penca buhun*) or "original *penca* songs" (*lagu penca asli*); a limited repertoire of older tunes, in part coinciding with *lagu rakyat daerah,* in part consisting of old non-Islamic spiritual tunes, like "lagu kidung." For further details, see Pätzold (2000:245-247).	"Religious songs" (*lagu agama*), e.g. "Tamba Ati"; also songs from "old *Penca* songs" (*lagu penca buhun*) repertoire, often with reinterpreted meanings, e.g. "Kembang Gadung."
"Local folk songs" (*lagu rakyat daerah*): This is the main shared repertoire between the two contextual settings.	
"Ketuk Tilu "songs" (*lagu Ketuk Tilu*), e.g. "Mainang."	"Prayer songs" (*sholawatan*), e.g. "Sholawat Badar."
"Jaipongan songs" (*lagu Jaipongan*), e.g. "Senggot."	"Religious advices" (*nadoman*), e.g. "Rukun Imam Rukun Islam."
"*Tembang Sunda* songs" (*lagu tembang Sunda),* e.g. "Hariring Nu Kungsi Nyanding."	"Songs of praise," or "Songs of religious advice" (*pupujian*).
Additional repertoires not addressed here:	
"(Gamelan) *Kiliningan* songs" (*lagu kiliningan*), e.g. "Kulu-Kulu Barang," "Wangsit Siliwangi."	
"Patriotic songs" (*lagu perjuangan*): A small repertoire from the era of the Independence war (1945-1949), e.g. "Halo halo Bandung" (Marzuki).	
In urban ares, like Bandung and Jakarta, international repertoires may be used in connection with the *Kendang Pencak* ensemble, e.g.: "A Hard Days Night" (Lennon/McCartney), "La Paloma" (de Yradier), "Going Home" (Kenny G.).	

Figure 5.11. Table showing the music repertoires of *perguruan* and *pesantren* performance contexts in West Java; most are cited in this chapter.

terbangan, *gembyung Cirebon*), and single-headed drum-based ensembles (*rampak bedug/adu bedug*). A third type of music ensemble that utilizes the double-headed drum *kendang* (*kendang pencak*) is most common within the secular performance contexts of *pencak silat*, but is rarely featured within more Muslim-oriented performance contexts. The major reason for this demarcation seems to be the use of melodic instruments instead of vocals; the virtuoso melody lines played by the

double-reed *tarompet* evoke powerful musical qualities, but they cannot replace the ability of the human voice to spread the word of Islam. One additional reason for restricting the *kendang* ensemble type from Muslim-oriented contexts may be the character of its explicitly accentuated rhythmic structures (*tepak*). The accentuated rhythmic structures of the *tepak*, along with the exciting presentation of the *pencak silat* performers, tend to monopolize the audiences' attention. These distinctions, viewed from a functional Muslim point of view, allow us to observe detailed syncretism in the interpretations of the instruments and the whole *kendang pencak* ensemble towards features considered Islamic.

Today, the development of both the movement art *pencak silat* and the music connected to Muslim communities is losing impact among Muslim modernists, though it remains an important item of education within more traditionally oriented Muslim communities. Here, *pencak silat* changes its earlier function of mediating Islam according to the duty of *dakwah* and becomes a medium for the education of youths' self-discipline, self-consciousness, and social responsibility within Islamic school institutions.

Notes

1. The author would like to thank Dr. Made M. Hood, Monash University, for reviewing this work.

2. The term *pencak silat* is a composite of recent origin (late 1940s), deriving from the Sundanese/Javanese *penca(k)* and the Malay and Sumatran *silat*, and was made official in 1973. Both words have their own etymology and local analogies. For West Java, the terms *penca(k)* and *maén po* are of utmost relevance. For further discussion, see Pätzold (2000, 9, 30–31). To avoid the confusion of many terms, this chapter will use "*pencak silat*" for many of the variants. See Figure 5.9 for the diverse terminology for the variant movement art forms.

3. Literally "*perpaduan Usik dan Musik*." See Masriatmadja (1990, 156–157).

4. Personal communication with Pak A.S. Masriatmadja, today one of the senior teachers (*pinisepuh*) of the *Himpunan Pencak Silat Panglipur* school (in Baleendah near Bandung, October 1990). This formulation can be found in other traditional settings with a similar, disciplined focus.

5. A school acting both in the form of an autonomous *perguruan* and as a *perguruan* based within national educational institutions is the *Himpunan Pencak Silat Panglipur*. In 2006, the Bandung-area school operated 16 branches (*cabang*), several of them connected to national institutions of education, like SMA (*Sekolah Menengah Atas* = Middle Upper School), UPI (*Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia* = Indonesian University for Education), and STSI (*Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia* = Indonesian University of the Arts).

6. Some of these schools had an important—and in part unpleasant—role in the transition from Suharto's *Orde baru* regime to the democratic *Era Reformasi* since 1998.

A detailed account of these developments can be found in Wilson (2003, 279–280) and Pätzold (2007a).

7. The term *perguruan* finds analogies in West Java (i.e., *paguron* (Sundanese), *himpunan* (lit.: association), or *keluarga* (lit.: *family*)).

8. *Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia* was founded in 1948 in Surakarta, Central Java. Its main office today is located in the *Padepokan Nasional Pencak Silat Indonesia* in Jakarta, together with the main office of its international sister organization, PERSILAT (*Persekutan Pencak Silat Antara Bangsa*).

9. The *Persatuan Pencak Silat Indonesia* was founded in Bandung in 1957, where its office still can be found (Sapari 1978, 5, Maryono 2002, 40–47).

10. For West Java, there are historical records from the 19th and early 20th centuries of local *ulama* specializing in the *Cikalong* style of *pencak silat*, a style that stems from the vicinity of Cianjur. For further details, see Pätzold (2000, 62f.).

11. The concepts of (*ilmu*) *batin* in West Java and of *kebatinan* in Central Java should not be confused. A comparative study on this interesting topic, to my knowledge, has not yet been undertaken. For general information on *batin* in West Java, see van Bruinessen (1995); on *kebatinan* and *kejawen* in Central Java, see Geertz (1960), Anderson (1972), and Mulder (1998/R 2005). For a detailed account of the relations between inner power and *pencak silat* in West Java, see Wilson (2003, 140–196).

12. Personal communication with Haji A. Hidayat, *kuncen dalem* (key holder to a sacred place) of the tomb (*makam*) of Cikundul near Cianjur, and legacy keeper of the *Cikalong* style of *Pencak Silat*, on August 2, 2006. The etymology of the term *Asrol* is uncertain, most likely originating from the Arab term *asrar*, meaning secret. In this case, *èlmu Asrol* would be translated as "secret knowledge."

13. There are some *perguruan* led by women. Ibu Enny Rukmini Sekarningrat (born in 1914), one of the daughters of the schools' founder, Abah Aleh (1856–1980), leads the *Himpunan Pencak Silat Panglipur* (founded in 1909). This charismatic old lady is still actively involved in the strategic outlining of this oldest traditional school of the Garut-Bandung area. My long-time teacher and research companion, the late Ibu Nani R. Sukeja (1943–1996), was co-leader of the *Perguruan Riksa Diri* from Bandung. A younger female teacher is Ibu Rita Suwanda, younger sister of the late master teacher, Pak Herman Suwanda (1955–2000) of the Bandung-based, internationally operating *Mande Muda/Suwanda Academy* school. I assume that a feminist research approach on this small, but important group of women (and their students) within the male-dominated *pencak silat* world of West Java and other regions in Southeast Asia would be a promising task. Having worked with a woman teacher and co-researcher in 1990 and 1994–95 myself, I am aware of the difficulties and perspectives involved. For a better understanding of this topic, see Rasmussen and Kartomi in this volume. For an anthropological feminist research perspective of the traditional *pencak silat* world of the Minangkabau in West Sumatra, I recommend the pioneering work of Hiltrud Theresia Cordes (1992).

14. On national and especially international levels of perception, the connection with an Islamic spirituality is not mandatory: Balinese *pencak silat* teachers may relate to Hindu

Dharma prepositions and some European or American teachers may relate the practice to Christian beliefs. For West Java, however, the relation to Muslim beliefs is quite widespread.

15. For West Java, the most important of the *wali sanga*, or "nine saints," is Sunan Gunung Jati, the "Saint from Jati Hill" in Cirebon. Besides his importance in the general spreading of Islam in West Java, local lore holds that he developed local arts traditions, such as *gembyung* (frame drum ensemble) music.

16. While there are other etymologies as well such as *rudatun* (from Arabic meaning "flower garden"), many practitioners favor this explanation connected with socio-political "trickery."

17. From *(burung) kuntul* = "silver crane." The exercises proceed to an upright, one-legged "crane" stance, where the style obtained its name.

18. This kind of body calligraphy symbolism can be found in other regional contexts of *pencak silat* as well; for further details, see Barendregt (1994, 128 on *langkah lam*) and Pätzold (2000, 285–286).

19. This opposition does not fully compare the *musik Islam-musik Islami* dualism as depicted by Hermawan (2000), because of the purely instrumental performance practice of the latter genre. On this topic, see also van Zanten in this volume.

20. "Jati diri seni-budaya warga Muhammadiyah lebih merujuk ke budaya Arab, yang dianggap sebagai budaya Islam dibandingkan budaya lokal, yang dianggap mewariskan animisme dan paganisme yang menodai 'kemurnian Islam.'"

21. On the mystical implications of the *Isra Mi'raj*, see, for example, Schimmel (1995, 310–313).

22. For further details, see sample 1 and its description on the companion website, and Pätzold (2007b).

23. This instrument is more commonly called *rebana*, especially in the Jakarta area.

24. On the Sundanese tuning models, see, for example, van Zanten (1986).

25. For further details on several *terbangan* subgenres, see Pätzold (2000, 293–304).

26. For further data on the *gembyung* genres, see Pätzold (2000, 270–278), Novi (2002), and Mulyani (2004).

27. See the description for audio sample 2, and Pätzold (2007b).

28. I have to mention that there is a similar local history on the related music art called *brai* or *birahi*, which has no relationship to the performance practice of *pencak silat* or related movement arts, and therefore will not be discussed in this chapter. On this art, see Matthew Isaac Cohen's chapter in this volume.

29. The teachings related to Prince (*Pangeran*) Walangsungsang, who is said to have been a son of King Prabu Siliwangi and the uncle of Sunan Gunung Jati, are of a non-discursive, exclusive character; they are given from the teacher to the mature student only. As I am not an initiate, I must rely tentatively on secondary sources.

30. On the *sampyong* (or *sampiong*), see Pätzold (2000, 284). There is no relationship of the *sampiung* dance with *kacapi* and *tarawangsa* accompaniment as cited by Atmadibrata (1980, 211).

31. Literally "...*jenis kesenian rakyat yang bernafaskan Agama Islam*" (Soepandi and Atmadibrata 1977, 41).

32. A different ensemble, called *genjring bonyok*, guided an older form of the *sisingaan*. On the historical development of the *sisingaan* in Subang district, see Irawan (1992, 51–58). Recent developments show considerable change of performance practice: The movement elements taken from *pencak silat* are declining, and the *kendang pencak* music is sometimes replaced with popular *dangdut* music. See Hellmann (2006) for further details.

33. Detailed structural samples of the rhythmic forms used by the different ensemble types discussed here can be found in Pätzold (2000, 208–310).

34. On the secular side of the multifaceted repertoire used during *pencak silat* art (*seni*) performances, I have never heard melodies played from the popular *dangdut* genre; the rhythms of this genre seem to be too soft to support any presentation of martial prowess. For a more detailed account on the relationships between the *dangdut* music genre and Islam in Indonesia, see Andrew Weintraub's chapter in the present volume.

35. The discussion with Ibu Nani R. Sukeja and Pak Mochtar D.S. took place on July 6, 1995, and I held a subsequent review discussion with Sukeja on July 8, 1995.

36. This is by no means the only example of a reinterpretation of a pre-Islamic cosmological concept as a cultural property of Islam. The *cimande* style of *pencak silat*, for example, is said to have originated in the early days of Islamization in West Java. It can historically be traced back to at least the second half of the 18th century, and is commonly regarded as the likely oldest *pencak silat* style of West Java still being practiced. Despite the perception of being an heirloom art of Islam, one finds a basic movement pattern called *pancer opat* in this style. This cross-shaped floor design figure has a direct relationship to the cosmology of the *Anu Dulur Opat Kelima Pancer*, the "four siblings of the self, with the self in its center." Practitioners acknowledge this relationship today, though they reinterpret it with Muslim features. Moreover, I have found floor design figures similar to the *pancer opat* in *pencak silat* styles of several regions of Indonesia, from the Toba Batak in the northwest to Bali in the southeast, and every local occurrence is interpreted with local spiritual features: Christian, Muslim, or Hindu. (Editors' note: since the "four siblings" concept is found throughout the region, including Bali where it is known as *kanda empat*, we can affirm that it is indigenous to Indonesia or Southeast Asia and unrelated to both global Islam and Hinduism.)

37. *Pahlawan-pahlawan ti Pasantrén* (Heroes from the Pesantren) was a novel by Ki Ummat (aka Ki Umbara, original name K. Wiredja Ranusulaksana, 1914–2005) and S.A. Hikmat (1966) that well illustrated the patriotic deeds, including *pencak silat* exercises, and resistance of two Muslim *kyai* during colonial times and the Indonesian war for independence.

38. Quoting Yus Wiradiredja from STSI Bandung, Mustappa writes: "*Pupujian*, *nadoman*, *genjring* atau *rudat*, sekarang hampir tak ada lagi. Yang masih sering terlihat sekarang, paling-paling *nasyid* dan *marawis* katanya dengan nada prihatin" ("*Pupujian*, *nadoman*, *genjring,* or *rudat* are rare to find nowadays. What still often can be observed today are *Nasyid* and *Marawis* at the most, he said in a sad voice").

39. The discussion of the whole role of the *pesantren* exceeds the scope of the present text but is of major importance in discourses on Islam in Indonesia today. See further Abd

A'la (2006). For a comprehensive discussion of *pesantren* culture in Central Java, see Moosmüller (1989).

40. The last word is an acronym built from the terms Sakti-Bhudi-Rasa.

41. Personal communication with Pak Cecep and Opan, July 29, 2006. See also Kompas (2005).

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Part III

Global Currents and Discourse

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6

From "Dust" to Platinum: Global Currents through the Malay World of Musical Islam

Charles Capwell

Charles Capwell's contribution to this volume is an outgrowth of earlier research on the musical genre gambus *(Capwell 1995), a music derived from the musical practice of Yemeni immigrants to Southeast Asia that became widely practiced and even iconic of Southeast Asian Islam. His original analysis drew attention to a process of cultural commerce between the Middle East and Southeast Asia largely hidden from scholarly awareness despite increasing interest in the process of globalization. In this volume, Capwell calls into question the tendency among scholars in the humanities and social sciences to relate globalization to modernization and to equate modernization with Westernization with another case study of Indonesian Islamic music. Drawing from Charles Taylor's book on* Modern Social Imaginaries *as well as Arjun Appadurai's description of the "link between social life and the imaginary" and James Clifford's notions of the field as a "contact space," Capwell analyzes the phenomenon of the Jakarta-based music group, Debu ("dust" in Indonesian). Comprised of American and European expatriates who moved to Jakarta because their sheikh had a mystical revelation directing them to do so, Debu performs music with Indonesian lyrics on spiritual themes set to a pastiche of international musical styles and influences. Debu has been a huge success in the world of Islamic pop, with their first album "Mabuk Cinta" (Drunk with Love) a platinum bestseller. The chapter reflects not only significant developments in Islamic music in Indonesia but also in the theoretical frameworks we use in our understandings and representations. Supported by his description of Debu, Capwell suggests that Indonesian musical culture and Islam have been influenced by processes of globalization that travel outside the one-way flow of Western influence and appropriation on a multilane highway between various points of departure and arrival.*

In my initial foray into Southeast Asia as an ethnomusicologist, I was drawn to the genre known as *gambus*, an accompanied song style to which the dance *zapin* is performed (see Capwell 1995 and Nor 1993). This music, brought to Southeast Asia by Yemeni traders, has become a marker both of Arab ethnicity—within and without the Arab descent communities—and, at large, of the Islamic social imaginary of the host region. By this I mean that the Arab-derived musical culture that has been indigenized in the Southeast Asian area is a *practice* by which the populace experiences the realization of its conceived relationship to Islam. In his lucid book on *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Charles Taylor explains such practices as "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations....[the] focus is on the way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories, and legends," and, I would add, in musical activity (2004, 23). In the creative dynamic that enables bringing into being what is desired in the imagination lies the impetus for expressive forms that embody and give affective quality to what otherwise would remain wraith-like conceptual entities.

In Southeast Asia, when Ramadan rolls around even those Muslims who may have only a tenuous relationship to Islam feel a connection with their coreligionists and their shared "normative notions and images" by which they "'imagine' their social surroundings...in images, stories, and legends" as well as in music. During Ramadan, the airwaves and public spaces are filled with the kinds of songs that create an aural and kinetic connection with the mental images people have of a land of desert sands, flowing robes, and a numinous holiness. Those whose imaginary is populated with ideas of modernity and national sentiment may dismiss as outdated and foreign such sonic Arabisms as augmented seconds, the '*ud*, or Arabic-influenced pronunciation of local idiom, but these sounds are, nevertheless, part of the hegemonic world of Islamic identity opposite to which they now contrast their own conceptions of the modern Muslim in Southeast Asia, with trendier musical realizations that traffic along the different routes of the globalizing models from the West. As an example, we may consider the 2004 album *Raihlah Kemenangan* by the pop group Gigi, which updates in metal-influenced style and with occasional rap some older Ramadan favorites for a younger generation. Songs like "Tuhan" and "Rindu Rasul" by Drs. M. Samsudin Hardjakusumah, known as Sam, of the perennially popular group Bimbo, have been transported from the softer, acoustically

oriented, and mellifluous realm associated with that group to a more contemporary and youth-oriented sonic world.

The vertiginous pluralism of musical styles through which Indonesian Muslims invoke their Islamic identity has created a public sphere where various imaginaries are tried out and contest for a place in the social structure, and they attest to a lively and diverse set of views. Islam in Indonesia and other areas of Southeast Asia demonstrates a complex variety of imaginaries that contradict and undermine any concept of monolithic unity whether imposed from without or asserted from within the *umma.*

The currents that have flowed through what we could call—with tongue in cheek—this "religioscape," have brought various bits of spiritual flotsam on the musical waves arriving from distant places. Reassembled, reimagined, and revivified in their new homeland, such musical ingredients contribute to a musico-religious culture that is both tethered and free-floating, at home and in the world, and this presents difficulties for the musical ethnographer. As Arjun Appadurai has written, "The issue…is…how the role of the imagination in social life can be described in a new sort of ethnography that is not so resolutely localizing.…The link between the imagination and social life…is increasingly a global and deterritorialized one." With Debu as a test case, I support Appadurai's desire for "a new alertness to the fact that ordinary lives today are more often powered not by the givenness of things but by the possibilities that the media (either directly or indirectly) suggest are available" (1996, 55).

The artistic realm described in Indonesian as "*musik yang bernafaskan Islam*" ("music that breathes Islam") is one of those in which "the link between imagination and social life is increasingly a global and deterritorialized one." *Maqam*-based cantillation, Bollywood beats, and a cappella boy groups have all contributed to a heady mix that may leave Islam panting with the exertion of keeping up, but not from cultural asphyxiation.

As ethnographers, we can observe this realm of global imaginaries and local practices that define a cultural space in continuing flux only if we are content with capturing a blurry image—like that of a sprinter caught with a slow shutter—or a hyper-sharp one—like a macro shot of some infinitesimal part of an insect. The bigger picture is never still, and the smaller can never be comprehensive. "Fieldwork," as James Clifford remarks in an essay on the subject, "thus 'takes place' in worldly, contingent relations of travel, not in controlled sites of research." The ironic quotes around the phrase "takes place" draw attention to the inadequacy of thinking of fieldwork as an enterprise taking place in a circumscribed and situated site where the ethnographer attempts to gain an understanding of human practices and ideas. His model example is the work

done by Anna Loewenhaupt Tsing among the Dayaks of south Kalimantan, which is the subject of her book, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen*; he says of it that "Her field site…is never taken for granted as a natural or traditional environment. It is produced, a contact space, by local, national, and transnational forces of which her research travel is a part" (1997, 68).

A "contact space" is, indeed, the kind of space in which Islam was established in Southeast Asia as Arab traders traveled there, sometimes sojourning for years or generations in places like Gujarat or Bengal before settling in the archipelago where they may have encountered other Islamic peripatetics like the Ming admiral Zheng He and his vast fleets from China. The flow still continues through this "contact space," upsetting the idea that there is a "there" there, and Clifford offers a positive suggestion for dealing with such a space when he says that "we may find it useful to think of the 'field' as a habitus rather than as a place, a cluster of *embodied* dispositions and practices" (1997, 69). This idea also reinforces Taylor's interest in practices rather than the theoretical as the expression of the social imaginary. One of the areas of fieldwork where an awareness of this "habitus" aspect is essential is when we work with diaspora consciousness. Determined, as Clifford describes it, both negatively by experiences of discrimination and

> positively through identification with world-historical cultural/political forces, such as 'Africa' or 'China[,]' [t]he process may not be as much about being African or Chinese as about being American or British or wherever one has settled, *differently* [emphasis added]. It is also about feeling global. Islam, like Judaism in a predominantly Christian culture, can offer a sense of attachment elsewhere, to a different temporality and vision, a discrepant modernity (1997, 256–7).

It is all these ideas about social imaginaries, cultural flux, the nature and sense of a concept of place in peoples' lives and in our science, and modernity that I have been keeping in mind as I have tried to get a handle on an interesting new development in Indonesia's Islamic music scene. Shortly before I met the musical group Debu in Jakarta in December 2005, they had attracted a considerable amount of interest from the Muslim public in Indonesia. This might be attributed, first of all, simply to their exotic appearance (see Figure 6.1).

This group of black and white largely American Sufis now living, praying, and performing in Jakarta has stirred up a lot of interest in the capital city, and they have entertained vast audiences in many other places in Java and other islands in live concerts and over the airwaves. The leader of the musical group, Mustafa, has become something of an *idola remaja*, a youth idol. Debu has an impressively slick and comprehensive website, and their fans, even *pesantren*

Figure 6.1. Debu in performance, Jakarta, December 2003. (photo by Anne. K. Rasmussen)

youth who are are thought to be sequestered from or to eschew popular culture, are clearly familiar with this new musical media. During the performance I attended and recorded, for example, many young people from the crowd came up to the stage with their cell phones in hand to take brief video clips with the members of the group. If that didn't satisfy them, no doubt they later downloaded the wallpaper and ringtones listed in the insert that came with Debu's second album (see Figure 6.2).

As several emails on Debu's website reveal, their fans admit to being perplexed by a group many of whose members are, as one remarks, "from the country of Uncle Sam, so famous for free sex and drugs." And another confesses,

> The first time I saw the personnel of the group, as far as I knew, right, was that most Americans liked to spend money, enjoy free sex, alcohol and the like, but my impression was only from films; maybe I was mistaken because maybe in their actual everyday life they weren't so bad as in the films, but the personnel of the Sufi music group Debu seem very Islamic, and, let's take note, aren't they all from America and some other countries?

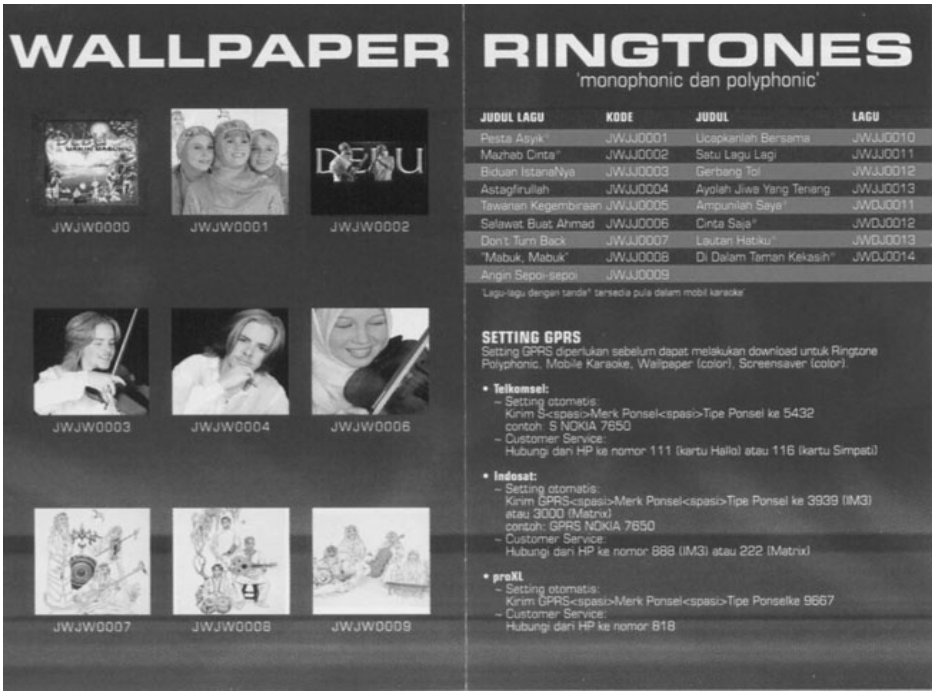

Figure 6.2. Album insert advertising wallpaper and ringtones with Debu themes.

> Before I used to like western music like Elton John, George Michael, Michael Jackson, Westlife, Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston and such because I wanted to be thought modern, not old-fashioned, and knowing such songs by heart increased one's prestige. But slowly I thought songs like that weren't much use, they only distanced us from Islam—just look at the lifestyles of the singers!![1]

So, who are these people whose premier album broke into the Indonesian Top 10 in 2003 and had sold nearly 90,000 copies by the end of 2004? Living as a somewhat scattered community in several houses in far south Jakarta, they and their families are connected through marriage and as disciples of of Syekh Fattaah, an American who was given his "*izin,*" or "permission" as a Syekh, by an Albanian Syekh named Jamali.

While Fattaah realized his spiritual quest in his early life of travel to many countries, it wasn't until quite a bit later that his wife became a Muslim and followed him into a religiously oriented life. When they returned to the United States, they became involved in various educational projects in California,

Washington, Texas, and New Mexico before emmigrating to the Dominican Republic where their manager, Najib Ali, who was then one of their students, had a younger brother studying medicine. Before this, however, while still in New Mexico, Fattaah had started a band named Dust on the Road—the Indonesian name of the current band, Debu, means "Dust"—and he remains the group's primary lyricist.

In the Dominican Republic, Fattaah, along with other members of his family and their Sufi community, like Najib, eventually felt uncomfortable living in an environment they felt was not supportive of an Islamic way of life. Seeking a way out, he at last had a kind of vision in which he heard a voice whisper the name "Indonesia," a place unknown to any of the group and seemingly a place of the imagination. By means of a search on the Internet, contact was made with a Muslim organization in Sulawesi, and in 1999 Debu came to live in Makassar (Ujung Pandang) at the invitation of the Islamic University of Indonesia, where they were engaged to help give remedial training in Islam to students who wanted to continue their higher studies in the university. Wishing to enliven what they thought to be a rather lifeless educational regime, Fattah and his group began unison-singing sessions with simple accompaniment as a way to awaken their students' interest and to make religious instruction more attractive. In this way, Debu, the musical ensemble, gradually came into existence and began to attract wider attention, which in turn encouraged the members of the group to make daily practice routines a part of their regular discipline. After a couple of years in South Sulawesi, the group moved to Jakarta with the help of some supporters, among whom is a businessman in the communications field specializing in SMS text-messaging services. Originally from America, a former Presbyterian minister, and a convert to Islam, he developed a business that featured a subscription service that sends a daily message to your cell phone in the form of a verse from the Qur'an along with an exegetical commentary.

The performers in Debu have, by their own admission, made enormous progress as musicians from their start in Sulawesi. Most of them were amateur musicians at best and without a background in any kind of music making that might be considered Islamic. There is still a wide range of musical ability and interest among them, and while the larger group performs for live appearances, when they work in a recording studio, they pare down personnel to the better players among them. Having access to high-quality recording facilities, engineers, and help from studio musicians in Jakarta as well as wide distribution by Sony Indonesia has helped them to be successful in marketing a polished product.

A passage from "Don't Turn Back," a song with an English text from their second album, *Makin Mabuk*, is given below, and an excerpt of the performance can be streamed from their website. The album title—*Drunker Still*—might seem a bit

odd for an album of Islamic devotional music, but it follows the theme of their first album, entitled *Mabuk Cinta* (*Drunk with Love*), which makes its meaning clear.

> Something from deep within me, what it was I couldn't say,
> Assured me that my real home across the ocean it did lay, [*sic*]
> I knew I did not belong here, of this I was very sure.
> Yet I was not certain I wanted to leave as I stood there on the shore.

Despite the fact the lyric seems to be about the Syekh's response to the mysterious voice he had heard beckoning him to Indonesia, it was written for the band Dust on the Road, which he had formed while living in New Mexico years before. The music credit on the disc acknowledges both Syekh Fattaah and his son Mustafa, who is Debu's lead vocalist and music arranger.

Mustafa grew up listening to all sorts of music collected from the various countries where his parents had traveled and lived, and his arrangements of his own or of borrowed tunes are done in an eclectic mix of idioms that is a musical instance of the deterritorialized imagination on which Appadurai wants to focus attention in a new kind of ethnography. Such an idiosyncratic musical idiom cannot simply be described as a postmodern pastiche, because the negative connotations associated with the phrase that imply a purely decorative compilation of empty signs. These denotations militate against any serious consideration of Debu's impact on popular Islam in Indonesia exemplified by its appearances on MTV Indonesia, its debut entry into the Top 10, its ability to draw live audiences in the tens of thousands, and its inevitable contribution to the social imaginary of Indonesian Islam through the embodied experience of musical enjoyment.

In trying to understand the Debu phenomenon in Indonesia, we can appreciate Appadurai's points regarding place, imagination and ethnographic method.

> "The terms of the negotiation between imagined lives and deterritorialized worlds are complex, and they surely cannot be captured by the localizing strategies of traditional ethnography alone. What a new style of ethnography can do is to capture the impact of deterritorialization on the imaginative resources of lived, local experiences" (1996, 52).

Debu and their fans are an example in Indonesian Islam of what I have discussed elsewhere in relation to the concept of multiple modernities (see Capwell 2003). Their music helps establish a public sphere in which it is possible to realize a way to be modern and Muslim. As James Clifford says, it "can offer a sense of…a discrepant modernity" (1997, 257).

In a strikingly modern way—with cell phone video captures, ringtones, MTV video broadcasts, and Sony marketing—the uprooted, deterritorialized music of Debu is making new perspectives available to Indonesia's Muslims.

> The imagination—expressed in dreams, songs, fantasies, myths, and stories—has always been part of the repertoire of every society, in some culturally organized way. But there is a peculiar new force to the imagination in social life today. More persons in more parts of the world consider a wider set of possible lives than they ever did before.... In the past two decades, as the deterritorialization of persons, images, and ideas has taken on new force...[m]ore persons throughout the world see their lives through the prisms of the possible lives offered by mass media in all their forms. That is, fantasy is now a social practice; it enters, in a host of ways, into the fabrication of social lives for many people in many societies. (Appadurai 1996, 53–54)

In the case of a group like Debu, the power of fantasy and the imaginary in their social lives may be exceptional, but through the musical embodiment of that fantasy and imaginary, they have created a social practice that is crucial, as Charles Taylor points out, to any social imaginary, something that is "not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories, and legends." In this way, Debu is more than just a weirdly exotic phenomenon in the Indonesian music market, as they might have been perceived just a few decades ago. In the 21st century, they are instead representative of the vanguard of new social imaginaries for the Indonesian *umma*.

Note

1. The Debu website, http://en.musikdebu.com/, accessed September 2010. Debu has a strong presence on the Internet.

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7

"Authentic" Islamic Sound? *Orkes Gambus* Music, the Arab Idiom, and Sonic Symbols in Indonesian Islamic Musical Arts

Birgit Berg

Birgit Berg conducted extensive fieldwork among people in the old settlements of ethnic Arabs in the Gorontalo and Manado regions of Sulawesi, who, like many Arab Indonesians, trace their lineage to Hadramaut, Yemen. Within these communities a genre of music called gambus, *also the name of the Arab lute that is central to the* gambus *orchestra or* orkes gambus, *is the key feature of ethnic celebration. In fact, no Arab-Indonesian wedding celebration is complete without an evening of* orkes gambus *music, when men take turns dancing into the night with their friends and family. Outside of Arab-Indonesian communities and throughout the archipelago, however,* gambus *is seen, heard, and used differently: as a music imbued with Islamic spirituality and performed in Islamic contexts. The use of Arabic language in song texts, Arabic script on liner notes, and Arab-derived musical instruments, melodies, and rhythms—in addition to the ethnicity of the performers themselves—are perceived by some to represent the original land of Islam. The categorization of* orkes gambus *as* musik islami *is not universally accepted, however, as many people do not interpret its visual, material, lyrical, and sonic symbols as "Islamic." This divergence in public opinion about music reflects the continuously dynamic role of Arab culture in Indonesian history and Islamic expression. Combining historical inquiry with ethnographic fieldwork among musicians and audiences, Berg explores the position of ethnic Arab* orkes gambus *music in the spectrum of Islamic musical arts as well as its rejection from that category, and the ways in which aesthetic value judgments reflect larger trends and tensions in religious expression and identity in a modern non-Arab Islamic nation.*

In modern Indonesian ethnic Arab communities—comprised mostly of descendants of migrants from Hadramaut, Yemen—the performance of *orkes gambus* music (small ensemble music featuring Arab-derived instruments, such as the *gambus* lute) remains a celebratory tradition that is worn as a badge of ethnic identity. This music is by no means limited to the walls of Arab quarters, but,

outside of Arab-Indonesian communities, it serves a different purpose: It is almost exclusively performed and consumed within Islamic settings. Just as the Arabic language is often incorporated into Islamic domains in Indonesia, the Arab musical aesthetic of *orkes gambus* music—with its Arab instruments and musical techniques—is easily enfolded within an Islamic context. Widely consumed as one form of *musik islami* (Islamic-themed music), *orkes gambus* music is frequently broadcast nationally on Islamic holidays, performed during religious events, and sold commercially under the category of religious music in record stores and street markets.

Not all Muslim Indonesians universally accept the incorporation of *orkes gambus* music into Islamic contexts or its categorization as *musik islami*. Although some consider the music to be Islamic-themed, others regard *orkes gambus* as entertainment music not suitable for performance within religious contexts and best left confined to boisterous Arab-Indonesian celebrations held in urban Arab quarters. *Orkes gambus* music uses Arab musical structures and the Arabic language, but its texts are mostly secular love poems without religious messages. Thus many Islamic religious leaders, artists, and *orkes gambus* musicians themselves object to its association with Islamic musical arts. As one musician proclaimed, "Where is its Islamic-ness? I myself am confused."[1] While the "Islamic-ness" of *orkes gambus* hinges on its use of Arab instruments, sound styles, and language, this is not enough to qualify it as Islamic according to its critics.

In this chapter, I assert that *orkes gambus* music illustrates the growing yet ambiguous role of Arab culture in global Islamic expression and that the adoption of ethnic Arab *orkes gambus* music into Islamic musical arts in Indonesia, as well as its rejection, reflect larger trends and tensions in religious expression and identity on local, national, and international levels. I will begin this discussion by introducing the *gambus* instrument and its variants and then describing its role within Arab-Indonesian communities in Indonesia. I will then turn the discussion to examples of *orkes gambus* music outside of Arab-Indonesian ethnic contexts and within the Islamic realm. It is here that I will analyze what makes this Arab ethnic music acceptable within Islamic contexts and how and why Arab music, along with other Arab cultural products, have become powerful symbols of both Islam and modernity in contemporary Indonesia.

Gambus: Regional and "Arab" Varieties

Gambus is the name of a wooden lute found in both Malaysia and Indonesia, but the term is also used generically to describe a small ensemble that incorporates

the instrument.[2] Traditional forms of the *gambus* instrument in Indonesia have 4 to 6 pairs of strings; this varies by region and *gambus* style. The instrument is often assumed to be of Arab ancestry; however, there is no definitive evidence for this ancestry except for the comparisons with Arab lutes and documents noting the use of the *gambus* in Arab communities in Southeast Asia as early as the 19th century.

As it is commonly accepted that the *gambus* instrument is not indigenous to Southeast Asia, scholars have debated its origins. Jaap Kunst notes two forms of the instrument (whose name he claims derives from the East African *gabbus*) found in early 20th century Java: one of Hadrami ancestry and another of Hijaz ancestry (Kunst 1973, 373). Christian Poché links the *gambus* with the Southern Arabian *qanbus*, a short-necked lute with three double and one single string widely disseminated throughout Southeast Asia and Africa (Poché 1984, 168). Curt Sachs and Henry Farmer trace the names *gambus* and *qanbus* to the Turkish *qopuz* (see Sachs 1923, Farmer 1978), and Sachs and Tilman Seebass even suggest that the instrument exhibits Chinese and Portuguese influences (see Sachs 1923, Seebass 1988). The *gambus* instrument often used today closely resembles the Egyptian *'ud*,[3] though various forms of the *gambus* instrument can be found throughout the Indonesian archipelago, making it difficult to declare a single organological history. Most scholars, however, agree that the instrument spread throughout the archipelago with the spread of Islam.

Gambus music styles can be organized into two main categories: regional *gambus* styles and Arab *gambus* styles (also called *orkes gambus*).[4] The latter category is the main focus of discussion in this chapter; however, I will introduce both categories because a significant part of my ongoing project is to distinguish what the term *gambus* means within the world of Indonesian expressive arts.

Regional *Gambus* Genres

Regional *gambus* instruments and genres exist across Indonesia. Performances often incorporate the singing of *pantun*, a Malay verse form, and the performance of *zafin* (*zapin*) dance. During my field research, I became familiar with regional *gambus* music from the province of Gorontalo on the island of Sulawesi.

The Gorontalo *gambus* instrument resembles the *gambus* lutes in Java described by Jaap Kunst (i.e., a traditional *gambus* form, not the modern *'ud*, see Figure 7.1). In the province of Gorontalo, the most renowned *gambus* player

Figure 7.1. Gorontalo *gambus*. (photo by author)

today is Risno Ahaya, known as the "King of *Gambus*" (*Raja Gambus*, see Figure 7.2). Blind since childhood, Risno Ahaya began practicing the *gambus* at the age of ten. His songs are mostly "*pandungi,*" or *pantun*, in the Gorontalo language (*bahasa Gorontalo*), and Pak Ahaya playfully improvises on these *pantun* during performance (often including references to people in his audience). Gorontalo *gambus* music is often accompanied by drums known as *maluwasi,* a group of around four small double-skinned hand-held drums that perform fast interlocking patterns. This *gambus* music, accompanied by dance, is known as *dana-dana*, a regional term for the Melayu *zapin* music/dance genre. *Dana-dana* performance in Gorontalo is rarely seen outside of cultural performances, government-sponsored programs, and competition settings, and it is often staged as part of *budaya daerah* (regional culture) in national cultural pageants.

Arab-Indonesian *Orkes Gambus*

The second major type of *gambus* music, Arab *gambus* or *orkes gambus*,[5] is an ensemble incorporating the *gambus* lute (almost always the modern *'ud*) and various forms of small handheld drums (including *tamtam*, *dumbuk*, and *marwas*—similar to the *maluwasi* found in Gorontalo and also known by its plural form *marawis*, see Figure 7.3). Modern *orkes gambus* ensembles also

Figure 7.2. Album Cover, Hagoga's Gogo Pusaka, featuring Risno Ahaya. (holding *gambus*)

incorporate the guitar, bass, and electric keyboard. This music is most often found within Arab-Indonesian urban communities that are made up primarily of the descendents of immigrants from Hadramaut, Yemen.

Orkes gambus ensemble music in Indonesia has three types of music and dance styles (see also Capwell 1995): *zafin*, *sarah*, and *zahefe*. *Zafin* (also spelled *zapin*) is a music/dance style and is well documented in Nor's book (1993), *Zapin: Folk Dance of the Malay World*, which describes the development and influence of *zapin* dance in Malaysian arts. Although associated with Hadramaut heritage and generally accepted as dance style of Arab descent, according to Nor no evidence has been found of a Hadrami dance style related to this genre (1993, 8).[6] In his 19th century essays documenting his experiences in various Arab communities in Indonesia, however, L.W.C. van den Berg notes a dance genre called *zafin* in

Figure 7.3. Instruments of the *orkes gambus* ensemble. Here the *gambus* is the modern '*ud*. (photo by author)

a Batavian Arab community (Berg 1886, 91–92), suggesting, though not confirming, its links to the Hadramaut.

In his study on *zapin* music in Malaysia, Nor distinguishes between two types of performance: *zapin Melayu* (Malay zapin) and *zapin Arab* (Arab zapin) (Nor 1993, 1). This distinction, between a local and an Arab style, also exists in Indonesia where *zafin* is commonly found in regional *gambus* performance as well as in Arab *orkes gambus* performance. However, dancing is restricted to men in Arab *zafin* performance.

Sarah (*Sharah, Syarah*) music is more closely related to popular music than *zafin*. It usually uses a faster, freer tempo than *zafin* and uses modern instruments, such as guitar, bass, and keyboard. *Sarah* music is in triple meter, unlike *zafin* or *zahefe* music (described below). The term *sharh* is used in Southern Arabia to describe a dance genre with music in triple meter, and the term *sharah* is found in the Southern Arabian area of Tihamah, where it is also used to describe a dance style (Shawqī 1994, 179, Bakewell 1985, 104). However, descriptions of these dances, which are performed in complete synchronization and with the accompaniment of handheld drums (*mirwas*), do not correspond with *sarah* dance as it exists today in Indonesia. Although *sarah* dance involves a pair of dancers, it is a spontaneous improvised dance that does not incorporate small handheld drums.

Zahefe (*Dehaifeh, Dehefe*) music often adopts a percussive style similar to *dangdut* music, a form of Indonesian popular music. It usually has a faster tempo, and

is known as the modern, and currently most popular, *orkes gambus* style. Unlike *zafin* and *sarah*, *zahefe* dance involves not a pair but rather three dancers who perform in a two-against-one style of playful and teasing dance in which either the single dancer or the pair that he is facing initiate dance steps that are mirrored by the other side. As with most Arab-Indonesian performance, dancers are always men.

The texts of *orkes gambus* songs today are most often in Arabic.[7] In modern *orkes gambus* performances, the use of Indonesian is limited to songs (usually using *pantun* lyric structure) performed along with *zafin* dance. Over the past decade, however, there has been an increasing tendency to abandon use of *pantun/zafin* genres and Indonesian lyrics altogether. Nearly all songs on modern *gambus* recordings are *zahefe* or *sarah* arrangements in Arabic, even though very few performers themselves are fluent in Arabic. In commercial *orkes gambus* recordings, these lyrics are written in Roman script, but they are also written in Arabic script.

Balasyik's *Jalsah*
Muhdar Alatas's *Nagiinaa* (1997)
Mustafa Abdullah's *Boom 10 Lagu Gambus Millenium* (2000)

Figure 7.4. Examples of *orkes gambus* album covers and liner notes. Note the solid body electric '*ud*, as well as *dumbuk* and *marwas* drums on the cover for Jalsah.

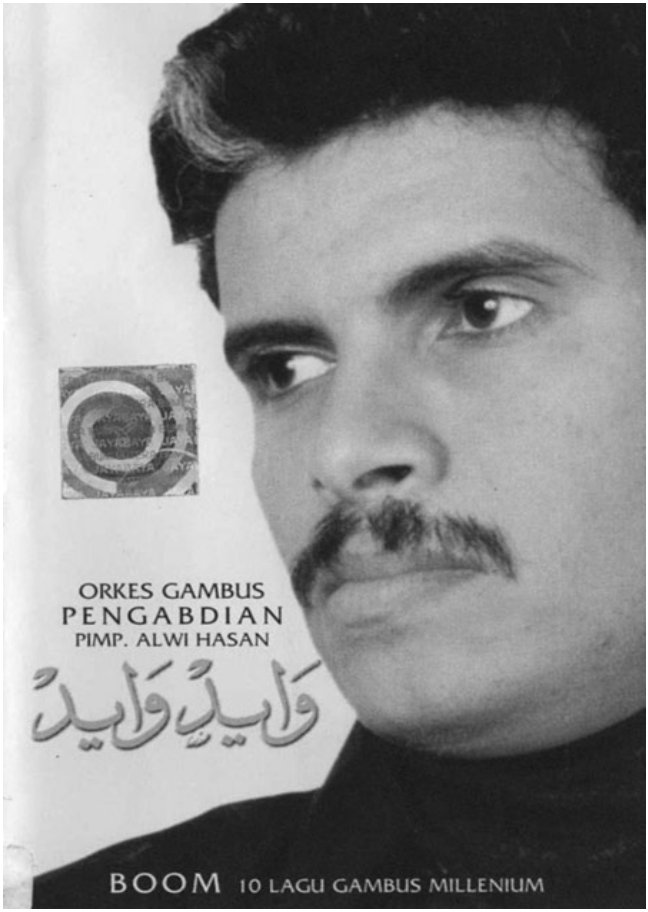


Figure 7.4. Continued

In addition to changes in language, the influences of *orkes gambus* songs over the decades also have changed. Whereas older *orkes gambus* songs were mostly *sholawat* praise songs to the Prophet Muhammad with a clearly religious tone, or light-hearted songs about life in the Hadramaut, today's *orkes gambus* performers (who are mostly young men) modernize old *orkes gambus* repertoire with arrangements of the latest Arab pop hits they find on recordings sold in local markets or even on the Internet. Performers transcribe the song lyrics using Roman script and then sometimes even transliterate the lyrics into Arabic script. As few performers are fluent in Arabic, the original Arab lyrics become obscured in the process.

The following is the song text excerpt and translation of "Nawwarti Ayyami" by Orkes Gambus El Bass (the Arabic transliteration appears in the liner notes). The singer uses the Egyptian dialect of Arabic; however, on the recording the transcription and pronunciation of many words are unclear. The following is the estimated translation by Mirena Christof, lecturer of Arabic language at Brown University.[8]

Nawwarti ayyami ragga'ti ahlami	You brightened my days, you brought back my dreams.
Ghayyarti lon wuta'wu sakel'il haya	(Arabic unclear. Words such as color, taste, life).
Allah…Allah…Allah…Ya Allah. Allah 3x	Allah…Allah…Allah…Ya Allah. Allah 3x
Allah gab ainak fa a'ini, (Habibi…)	Allah has made us see each other (my love)
Allah gama'beinak wu baini (Habibi)	Allah has brought us together (my love)

Arab-Indonesian Wedding Celebrations and *Orkes Gambus*

My first personal experience with *orkes gambus* music took place at a wedding in the city of Manado in North Sulawesi. When I first walked into the Arab community, tucked away behind the bustling Chinese district of the city, I was in awe of the grand three-story Turkish-styled mosque in front of me.[9] I was invited to attend a pre-wedding celebration at the bride's house on the night before the wedding. This night, known as *malam bedaka* (powder night)[10] in this region, is a night of prayer and celebration. Most commonly, the bride (*pegantin perempuan*) is dressed and adorned with henna (*laka*) on her hands and feet. Local community women and female relatives gather at the bride's home to read prayers (*burda*). They also offer the bride small blessings by placing a yellow powder (*bedaka*) on her palm, and then bring the remainder of this powder to the home of the groom.

While the scene at the bride's home is calm, the scene at the groom's home is quite the opposite. After the women finish reading prayers at the groom's

house, the men and invited female guests partake in an evening of music and dance known as *samrah*[11] and *handolo*. With the purpose of not only roasting but also exhausting the groom, men take turns dancing in pairs to *orkes gambus* music well into the night. At the close of the evening, they perform the *handolo* ritual in which important guests and relatives of the groom are invited to paint the groom's face and body with the yellow *bedaka* powder from the bride's ceremony. After adorning the groom with yellow powder, they lift the groom above their heads, throw him in the air, and dance around him. Although *handolo* is the climax of the evening, the highlight of the evening is the entertainment provided by the *orkes gambus* ensemble.

Although they have assimilated into Indonesian society and many today do not speak Arabic in their daily lives, Arab-Indonesians maintain and preserve their ethnic identity through their music and dance traditions, particularly *orkes gambus*. When I asked one young woman why she enjoyed *orkes gambus* music, she replied: "because I am from the Arab quarter, so it is a tradition."[12] Even members of the younger generation describe *gambus* as part of Arab-Indonesian *adat* (custom/tradition).

Figure 7.5. *Zahefe* dance, *samrah/handolo* evening. (Arab quarter, Bolangitang, North Sulawesi). (photo by author)

Until recently, cultural anthropologists and historians had not studied the history and traditions of Arab-Indonesians in great detail.[13] Even today most scholars of these minority communities rely on L.W.C. van den Berg's 19th-century study of Hadrami Arab communities in Dutch colonial Indonesia (*Le Hadhramout et les Colonies Arabes dans L'archipel Indien*), as there have been no recent comprehensive ethnographic studies of these communities since. Hadramis were famous traders and proselytizers of Islam throughout Africa, India, and Southeast Asia for centuries; however, most Hadramis who migrated left Yemen in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This period marked intense European imperialism in Yemen and improved transportation and communication, including the steamship and the telegraph. These elements, as well as tales of wealth and fortune to be found outside of Hadramaut, proved to be a driving force in Hadrami emigration.

For much of colonial history, the Dutch colonial government ostracized both Arab-Indonesians and Chinese-Indonesians. Unlike Chinese-Indonesians, however, Arab-Indonesians for the most part had been accepted into indigenous Indonesian societies, because, as only Hadrami men immigrated to Indonesia, they married with local women. Furthermore, Hadrami immigrants and traders were accepted because, like many indigenous Indonesians, they were Muslims. Many of them also played important roles as teachers and proselytizers of Islam within the region. As Natalie Mobini-Kesheh describes,

> Islam served a double purpose for the Hadramis. Not only did the shared religion provide many common ideas and customs…but also where their social and cultural practices differed from those of locals, these differences were often perceived by indigenous Muslims in a positive light (Mobini-Kesheh 1999, 24).

Religion and intermarriage thus helped Arabs integrate into Indonesian society.

Opinions of Arab-Indonesians in the archipelago in general fluctuated between two extremes, however. On the one hand, Arab-Indonesians were seen positively as pious teachers of Islam. Even today many Arab-Indonesians play prominent roles in local and national Islamic organizations and institutions. On the other hand, Arab-Indonesians were and continue to be associated with their role as merchants and in this light they are viewed negatively as greedy and rough. (One Javanese man, for example, described to me in disgust how Arab-Indonesians eat with their hands.) This acceptance and rejection of Arab-Indonesians is similar to the acceptance and rejection of *orkes gambus* music that will be explored later in this chapter.

In North Sulawesi, where I conducted most of my fieldwork, Arab families live in ethnic communities known as "*kampung Arab*." These communities are often former ethnic ghettos found across Indonesia that were administered by the Dutch during colonization.[14] During my research, I discovered that these urban Arab communities are interconnected. Members of the Arab community in Manado have close family members in Arab communities in Gorontalo and Sangihe-Talaud in North Sulawesi, and they have relatives even as far as Surabaya, Semarang, and Jakarta. Women in Arab communities often marry with other Arab-Indonesians and many then move to different cities, strengthening the ties between various urban Arab quarters. In North Sulawesi, these ties become evident during wedding celebrations in different areas, as Arab-Indonesians from one community will attend weddings in other regions. Arab-Indonesians in North Sulawesi also maintain traditions that distinguish them from non-Arab Muslims in the area, such as the performance of *orkes gambus* music and dance in Arab-Indonesian wedding celebrations.

One of the top modern *orkes gambus* performers in Indonesia today is the singer Nizar Ali Al-Haddad, whom I visited in Surabaya, East Java, in 2006. Nizar, as he is known by his fans, is part of the East Java *orkes gambus* scene. Born in Sumenep, Madura, in 1971, he notes a significant change in *orkes gambus* reception at the end of the 1990s when *orkes gambus* began to be performed outside of the wedding parties in the Arab quarter of Surabaya. Nizar describes that before 1999 people outside of Arab communities often referred to *orkes gambus* as *qasidah* (a term that denotes a popular Islamic music genre in Indonesia) because they were unfamiliar with *orkes gambus*. However, *orkes gambus* music then began to take on a new style, a faster *dangdut*-like style (*zahefe*). This style, he states, was more compatible with Indonesian taste leading to an increase in the popularity of this music outside of Arab communities.

Famous *orkes gambus* musicians from the past include Segaf Assegaf and Syech Albar; however, Nizar and his frequent partner Mustafa Abdullah represent the new generation of *orkes gambus modern*. Modern *orkes gambus* musicians often seek musical inspiration from the Arab world. Nizar himself looks for new music on the Internet or asks his friends returning from the Middle East to bring him new popular music recordings. Nizar then arranges these songs for the *orkes gambus* ensemble. As he describes it, Indonesian ears prefer the dominant percussive structures in *zahefe* and *sarah* styles, rather than the original arrangements of the Arab pop hits. Nizar does not see *orkes gambus* music as a static traditional genre. His goal is to modernize *gambus* music through the introduction of new music from the Middle East and through the use of digital sound and technology; in fact, he arranged many of his latest songs on his home computer.

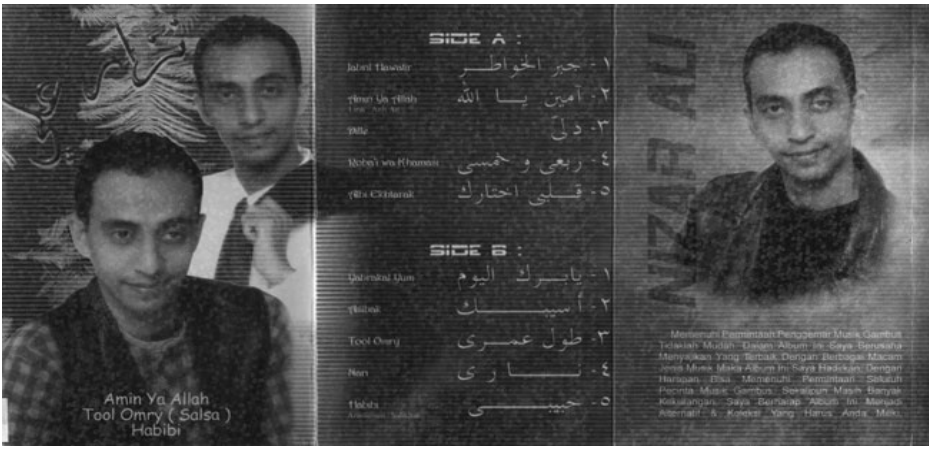
Nizar himself has been the focus of controversy among Arab-Indonesian communities in East Java. He pushed the boundaries of *orkes gambus* performance style and was one of the first *orkes gambus* singers to perform while standing. In traditional *orkes gambus* performance, known as *jalsa* in East Java, all performers (as well as all male party guests) sit on the ground around the dance carpet. Men stand only when it is their turn to dance. When Nizar first began to stand during his performances, many proponents of traditional *orkes gambus* objected to the drastic performance style change in which the vocalist becomes the focus of the performance rather than the dances performed by guests. Nizar also began to dance in place while singing, which some traditional *orkes gambus* fans found obscene.

Although perhaps not well known outside of Arab-Indonesian communities, Nizar and his peer Mustafa Abdullah are well known throughout Arab-Indonesian networks in Eastern Indonesia, where I conducted my fieldwork. In these communities, *orkes gambus* performers from East Java are superstars who once in a great while travel to and perform in Arab communities on the outer Indonesian islands. I first met Nizar when he performed at a wedding in the city of Gorontalo. He was hired by the governor of Gorontalo, Fadel Muhammad (who is an Arab-Indonesian himself), to perform at the *samrah* evening the night before the traditional Arab-Indonesian wedding of the governor's nephew. Such performances by East Javanese *orkes gambus* performers in outer island communities are rare due to the great costs in hiring them.

Orkes Gambus Outside Arab Communities: *Orkes Gambus* in Islamic Expression

Although *orkes gambus* music is a staple part of Arab-Indonesian tradition, Muslims across Indonesia who are not of Arab descent also perform and consume *orkes gambus* music. However, in these cases, the music is almost always performed within Islamic contexts.

In North Sulawesi, for example, *orkes gambus* music is part of community religious life in many Muslim communities. Often, youth organizations of mosques (known as *remaja masjid*) form *orkes gambus* groups or practice and perform *orkes gambus* dance genres (including *zafin*, *sarah*, and *zahefe* dance styles) to popular *orkes gambus* recordings. *Orkes gambus* is also performed at programs that celebrate the beginning of the fasting month Ramadan and at various *Halal bi Halal* programs to celebrate the end of the month of Ramadan. I witnessed *orkes gambus* performed at several inter-religious dialogues,



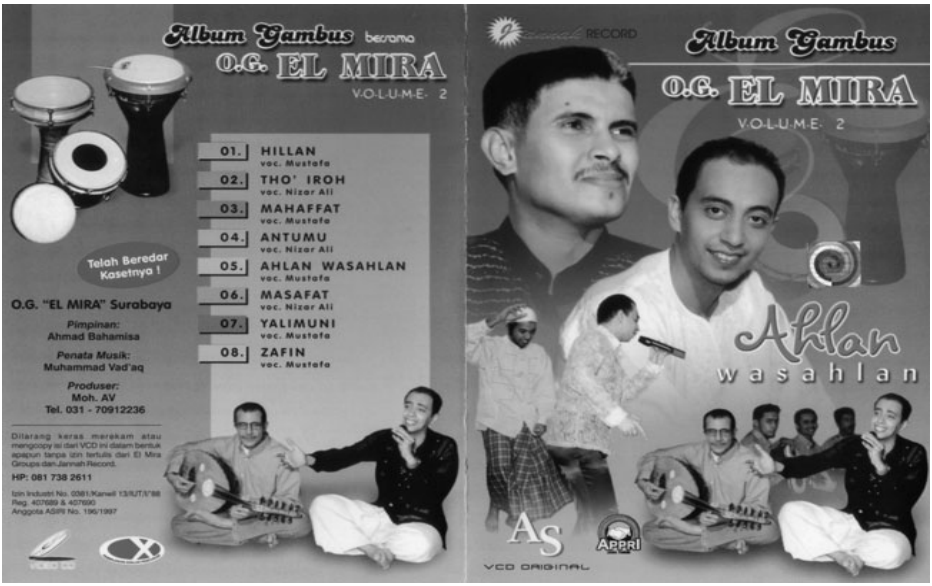


Figure 7.6. Examples of album covers. (a) Nizar Ali's *Nizar Ali*, (b) Orkes Gambus El Mira's Album Gambus *Ahlan Wasahlan*, featuring Mustafa Abdullah and Nizar Ali.

including a program at the governor's residence in North Sulawesi with the theme "Stabilize Harmony and Solidarity among Religious Groups"[15] in which religious representatives from several religions were invited to speak and perform as a means to promote religious understanding and tolerance. During this program, speeches and prayers by Christian, Catholic, and Islamic community leaders were interspersed with performances of Handel's

Hallelujah chorus by a local church choir and Arab popular love songs performed by a *orkes gambus* group from the local Arab community. Along with Quranic recitation, *orkes gambus* was incorporated as part of the Islamic portion of the program.

On national television, *orkes gambus* music is often shown on the TVRI national television station during the holy month of Ramadan as part of special *hiburan*, or entertainment, shows. In these programs, musicians are almost always dressed in Islamic clothing (*busana Muslim*). Performances are also aired regularly on Fridays following several Islamic talk shows, such as the show *Mutiara Jumat* ("Friday Pearl"), a women's Islamic discussion group. On this program, *orkes gambus* is introduced along with *nasyid* (a genre discussed later in this chapter) as *musik rohani* (spiritual music) and performances of both genres typically close the show.

Commercially, *orkes gambus* music is sold under the category of Islamic/religious music. I found this to be the case both in street stalls selling this music and in major music store chains, such as Disc Tarra, that I visited in several cities throughout Sulawesi and Java. It is even sold (along with other Islamic popular music) at music and book stalls in front of mosques.

Although often performed and marketed in Islamic contexts, *orkes gambus'* role as an Islamic genre remains ambiguous. Descriptions of *orkes gambus* from interviews and discussions illustrate the difficulty of defining *orkes gambus* music within the Islamic musical arts realm. Some terms used to describe *orkes gambus* music that I have come across during my research include

Nuansa Islam = The feel of Islam; Islamic nuance
Musik/Irama Rohani = Spiritual music; the rhythm of spirituality
Bernafaskan Islam = Of Islamic character (lit: music that "breathes Islam")

These terms identify *orkes gambus* as part of the realm of Islamic arts in Indonesia. Many Indonesians, however, do not identify *orkes gambus* music as Islamic at all; rather, they think of *orkes gambus* as mere entertainment music and object to any association of the music with religion. Some do not like such associations because the music is too fast, loud, and boisterous to be serious Islamic music. Some do not like it because they are not comfortable with the secular Arabic lyrics of modern *orkes gambus* repertoire. These lyrics are mysterious to many, as only Indonesians who have studied modern Arabic language can understand them. Others simply state that *orkes gambus* music is not their style, is just plain silly (*humoris*), or is "Arab ethnic music" (*musik etnis Arab*). As I mentioned before, Arab-Indonesians—often associated with this music—in general are viewed within opposing frameworks, either as exemplary Muslims or as greedy/rough

merchants. *Orkes gambus* music is also viewed within two frameworks: either as Islamic-themed music or as ethnic/entertainment music.

Orkes Gambus' Ambiguous Role in Islamic Musical Arts

"Islamic music" (*musik Islam*) has always been a contested term. It is, as Margaret Sarkissian describes, a "thorny issue in most Islamic societies" (Sarkissian 2005, 124). Some Muslim leaders believe music to be *haram*, or prohibited, and others only require it to be compatible with Islamic values and proper behavior. The term *musik Islam* can imply music that was actually performed during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and that is mentioned in the Qur'an or in the Hadith texts, something of which there are few examples. Anne Rasmussen, in her work on Quranic recitation and Islamic music in Indonesia, adopts the Indonesian idiom "*seni musik Islam*" (Islamic musical arts) to describe a range of Islamic genres (see Rasmussen 2001, 2005). Several of my informants noted that they also prefer to refer to such music (and other Islamic popular music genres) as "*musik islami*" (music with an Islamic quality) or as a part of "*budaya Islam*" (Islamic culture). *Orkes gambus*, therefore, is vaguely defined. It is not completely Islamic, yet at the same time it is inseparable from Islamic expression.

One way to clarify *orkes gambus'* ambiguous role in Indonesian Islamic musical arts is to compare it with other forms of popular Islamic arts in Indonesia. Two of today's most popular Islamic musical arts in Indonesia are *nasyid* and *lagu-lagu sholawat* (or *sholawat* songs). Popular Islamic musical arts in Indonesia are by no means limited to these genres; however, it is useful to compare these genres in order to illustrate how *orkes gambus* can be similar, yet drastically different, from generally accepted forms of popular Islamic musical arts in Indonesia.

Nasyid

Nasyid is group vocal music, often a cappella but sometimes performed with accompaniment. The term *nasyid* can be traced to the Arabic word *annasyid* (to lecture or reverberations) and means "(singer of a) religions song" (Barendregt and van Zanten 2002, 78). The genre, initially popularized in neighboring Malaysia, has become one of the most popular contemporary Islamic arts in Indonesia over the past decade. Adjie Esa Poetra's 2004 book *Revolusi Nasyid* (*Nasyid* Revolution) describes three main forms of *nasyid*: 1) *nasyid Melayu* that uses percussion, 2) *nasyid acapella* that is similar to R&B styles, and 3) *nasyid* that

uses *hymne* (or hymns) about *jihad* themes (themes that promote Islam) (Poetra 2004, v). These three forms of *nasyid* can use both Western and Middle Eastern music styles. The texts of popular *nasyid* songs are mostly in the Indonesian or Malaysian language, although, as Sarkissan notes (2005, 132), they are sometimes "peppered with specialized Islamic [Arabic] vocabulary."

The famous Indonesian Islamic preacher AA Gym, who himself composes *nasyid*, described *nasyid* as "one way of approaching *dakwah*" (*salah satu titik sentuh dakwah*) (Poetra 2004, xiii). *Dakwah* means "to teach about Islam," and it is a powerful and legitimizing word in Islamic communities, as performing *dakwah* and teaching about Islam are considered to be acts in reverence to God. *Dakwah* plays a fundamental role in *nasyid* culture through lyrics that promote proper behavior and the fulfillment of religious doctrine. As Patricia Matusky and Tan Sooi Beng describe, *nasyid* serves to "inculcate good values, morals and habits, and stress the importance of religion and allegiance to nation" (2004, 263). The following is the song text.

Jagalah hati jangan kau kotori	Protect your heart, don't contaminate it
Jagalah hati lentera hidup ini	Protect your heart, lighthouse of this life
Jagalah hati jangan kau nodai	Protect your heart, don't defile it
Jagalah hati cahaya illahi	Protect your heart, light of God

Beyond the clear religious message found in its texts, *nasyid* also gains legitimacy as a form of Islamic musical arts because of a reference to a poetic recitation/hymn form by a similar name found in historic Islamic texts, suggesting that *nasyid* was an acceptable practice in the early years of Islam (Ibid, 262), even if the style has changed dramatically since that time (see Figure 7.7).

The following is the song text excerpt and translation of *"Jagalah Hati,"* Indonesian *nasyid* written by A.A. Gym.

Lagu-lagu Sholawat (Sholawat Songs): *Cinta Rasul*

Sholawat are praise songs to the Prophet Muhammad in the Arabic language. The Arabic texts are the same throughout the Muslim world; however, when *sholawat* texts are set to music, the melodies and accompaniment can differ dramatically from region to region. The most commercially popular recording artist of *sholawat* in Indonesia today is Haddad Alwi, who over recent years recorded the *Cinta Rasul* ("Love for the Messenger") *sholawat* series, a series of cassettes, now compact discs of popular *sholawat* set to music and often marketed to children. The *sholawat* recordings of Haddad Alwi, although not in the Indonesian language, contain Arabic *sholawat* that are quite familiar to Indonesian Muslim ears such as "Yaa Nabi Salam Alaika" ("Prophet [Muhammad], peace be upon you"). These

Figure 7.7. Nasyid album cover example, The Fikr's Cinta (2004).

sholawat texts are commonly sung during various Islamic ceremonies in Indonesia and are therefore well known among the general population.

Haddad Alwi rejects the term *musik Islam* because to him the term implies that there is a type of music that is not Islamic, something he highly disagrees with. Born in the city of Surakarta, Central Java, he describes himself not as a singer of Islamic music but rather as a *pelantun sholawat*, or a *sholawat* reciter. Ustaz Alwi, as he is often known, claims that music is universal. He does not feel that the Arab musical idiom reflects religious affiliation, and he incorporates various styles into his *sholawat* recordings. His ultimate goal is *dakwah*, not music. Music only supports his *dakwah* mission. He will use piano music or traditional local music if he feels a listener will be drawn to it; he does not feel that he must use Arab music.

The following is the *sholawat* text excerpt and translation of *"Yaa Nabi Salam 'Alaika,"* as performed by Haddad Alwi. The Arabic transliteration is as found on a karaoke recording.

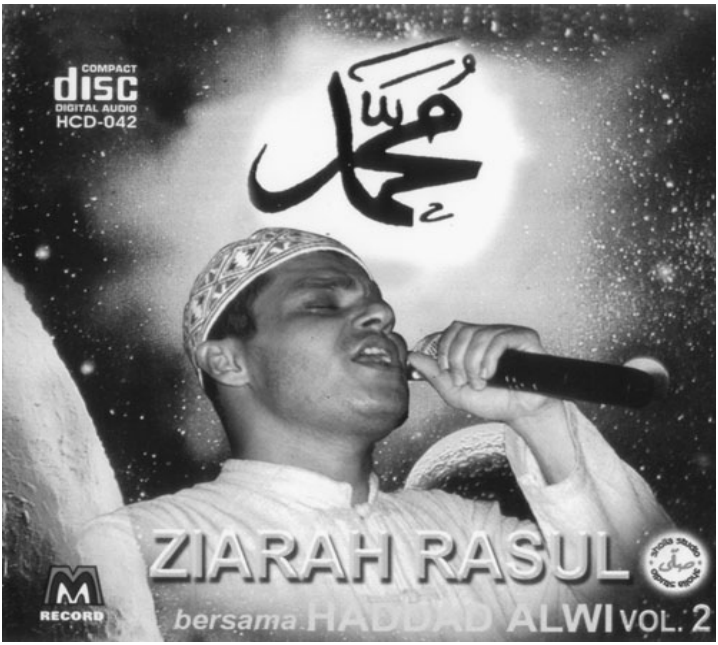


Figure 7.8. Haddad Alwi's Ziarah Rasul (2004).

Yaa Nabi salam 'alaika
Yaa Rasul salam 'alaika
Yaa Habiib salam 'alaika.
Sholawattullah 'alaika
Prophet, peace be upon you.
Messenger, peace be upon you.
Beloved, peace be upon you.
The blessings of Allah be upon you

Both *nasyid* and *sholawat* recordings have been referred to as *musik dakwah Islami*. In the case of *nasyid* and *lagu-lagu sholawat*, the music itself does not rely on the use of *maqam* (the Arab system of melodic modes) or Arab-derived instruments, like the *'ud*. The texts and religious message, or *dakwah*, are what make *nasyid* and *lagu-lagu sholawat* powerful and important in popular Islamic music expression in Indonesia. Although Arab-sounding melodies are used to enhance the affect of sholawat performances, the texts live independently of the melodies. Sholawat recitation (without musical intonation) is a common Islamic religious practice.

Is *orkes gambus* music also *dakwah* music? In general the answer is "no." It is not described as proselytizing music with the goal of educating about Islam, but

rather it is most often described ambiguously as "music with a religious feel" as I mentioned before. The issue of Arabic lyrics places *orkes gambus* music in a strange position. Often people, including the performers themselves, do not understand the lyrics of modern *orkes gambus* songs at all and this can become problematic when *orkes gambus* songs are secular love songs with no function or role in teaching about Islam. Nizar Ali claims:

> ...in general, people here don't understand Arabic...So I say 'habibi habibi,' which actually means 'my dear, my dear'...they think it is a religious praise....[Nizar sings] '*Allah, Allah, Allah, Allah...Ya Allah*'...Children say 'that song sounds Islamic'...'it's not Islamic' I say to them...non-Muslims also say 'Allah.'"[16] (See the previous "*Nawwarti Ayyami*" text by Orkes Gambus El Bass, 75–76.)

Although his music is marketed to Muslim audiences as well as Arab-Indonesian audiences, Nizar rejects *orkes gambus'* association with Islamic culture because of its secular (non-*dakwah*) texts.

Many Indonesian Muslims who consume *orkes gambus* music hold an ambivalent attitude toward *orkes gambus* lyrics, which today are often secular, not sacred. In regard to lyrics, Charles Capwell (1995) notes in his article on *gambus* music that the Arabic texts of *orkes gambus* songs have a nostalgic quality, reminding Muslims of their Arabic religious lessons as children. And, indeed, in Indonesia the Arabic language is identified with Islam; sounding and reading the Arabic of the Qur'an is, after all, fundamental to Islamic worship for all Muslims. Often the meaning of Arabic lyrics in *orkes gambus* songs is overlooked or ignored in favor of the positive Islamic aura that the Arabic language provides. Sarkissian describes a similar phenomenon with Arabic language in *nasyid* songs in Malaysia: "The use of Arabic is equally calculated: it makes songs special and more 'religious'. Arabic script used in liner notes makes songs seem even more esoteric, since not all Muslim Malaysians—let alone non-Muslim Malaysians—can read Arabic" (2005, 133). In the case of *nasyid*, Arabic conveys an Islamic message. This is not always the case with *orkes gambus*, however, and it is precisely this ambivalence towards *orkes gambus* lyrics that explains why the music is not clearly labeled Islamic. As Haddad Alwi notes, "Indonesians are confused with *gambus*. Arabic language doesn't mean it's Islamic. Islam isn't only Arab."[17]

Orkes Gambus' Appeal as an Islamic Arts Genre

One attraction of *orkes gambus* music as an Islamic musical art in Indonesia is its use of Arab sounding melodies, which are familiar to Indonesian ears from

Quranic recitation. In her article on Arab aesthetics and Indonesian musical arts, Rasmussen (2005, 66) notes that "the Arab sound" carries with it a certain "prestige." Arab sound offers the aura of "real" Islam. Many of today's popular Islamic musical artists (including Opick, Debu, Jefri Al-Buchori, *nasyid* groups, and Haddad Alwi, among others) frequently adopt Arab music elements and instruments; however, the use of the "Arab sound" within popular Islamic arts in Indonesia remains a creative option. This is not the case with *orkes gambus* music, which is associated with the realm of Islamic arts specifically because of its Arab sound.

When clarifying *orkes gambus'* placement within Islamic arts, it is important to note that the *gambus* instrument has been ascribed Islamic symbolism over the centuries in cultures throughout Indonesia. In the province of Gorontalo, the *gambus* and its genres are considered part of both regional culture and Islamic culture. Beyond the fact that the *gambus* instrument is assumed to have Arab antecedents, strengthening its ties to Islam, one of the main reasons for this connection is the innate relationship between religion and custom (*adat*) in Gorontalo culture. As Fahra Daulima (Gorontalo cultural activist and preservationist) described to me, "custom is rooted in Islamic teachings, Islamic teachings are rooted in the Qur'an" (*adat bersendi Shari'a, Shari'a bersendi Al Qur'an*). Ms. (Ibu) Daulima went on to draw a picture of three concentric circles. The core was *Shari'a* (Islamic law), surrounding *Shari'a* was *akhlak* (behavior), and the final circle was *adat* (custom). She described, "you see, in every Islamic culture, Islam reflects on custom, and it can also be seen in behavior."[18] According to Ibu Daulima, all Gorontalo arts, including local *gambus* and *dana-dana* forms, described as Gorontalo custom (*adat*) are considered to be Islamic because these forms abide by rules of proper Islamic behavior that are based on Islamic law.[19]

In a similar manner, some performers of *orkes gambus* music have described the music to me as acceptable within Islamic culture because it is *halal*. In Islam, the term *halal* denotes things that are permitted, even things that are good. This term is a powerful index of appropriate and acceptable behavior in Indonesian Islam. Describing *orkes gambus* as *halal* means that *orkes gambus* follows the rules, so to say. This *halal*-ness often relates to the manner in which the music is displayed—Islamic clothing (*busana Muslim*) is often worn, *aurat* or indecent areas of the body are covered, and men and women are often separated. Musicians are almost always male; female singers are sometimes permitted, but they are either well-respected older female singers in *busana Muslim* or they are a group of back up-singers also dressed in *busana Muslim* and segregated to the side of the *orkes gambus* group. Although many *orkes gambus* music texts may be secular Arab love/pop songs, oftentimes the secular nature of the song texts can also be overlooked in favor of the *halal* manner in which the music is displayed.

Historically, the dance genre *zafin* that is often performed with *orkes gambus* has taken on similar religious associations. As Nor notes:

> *Zapin*'s religious role is more historical. It was formerly a part of religious celebrations associated with the *Maulud Nabi* (Prophet Muhammad's birthday), *Hari Raya Puasa* (celebrated at the end of the Ramadan fasting month), *Hari Raya Haji* (celebrating the month of sacrifice), and *Maal Hijrah* (Islamic New Year). These are now highlighted by recitations from the holy Qur'an or the singing of religious hymns from the *Kitab Berzanji* and, in the past, by the performance of *zapin*. *Zapin* was the only Malay dance tradition which was allowed to be performed in and near mosques (Nor 1993, 10).

Contemporary *orkes gambus* performance has also come to be associated with religious celebrations over time. Again, this is mostly due to the polite nature of the art. As Nor notes with *zapin*:

> Contemporary *zapin* is also esteemed as a manifestation of Islamic influence on indigenous culture. The avoidance of body contact in the dance, the absence of overtly sensuous gestures, and the highly repetitive and symmetrical nature of the dance sequences conform to the abstract quality of Islamic art (Nor 1993, 88).

As noted above, some of the appeal of *orkes gambus* music as an Islamic genre is the politeness of the art and its compatibility with Islamic codes of behavior. This is especially the case with Arab *orkes gambus* music, as not only Arab *zafin*, but also *sarah* and *zahefe* dances prohibit men and women from dancing together. Only men are allowed to dance.

Not to go unmentioned is the important role of Arab-Indonesians in *orkes gambus* reception. *Orkes gambus'* association with *halal*-ness is strengthened by its association with Arab-Indonesian ethnic communities. As Rasmussen notes: "For the most part their performances are not religious but because the music and the people who play it have their origin in the Arab world, their music is understood to reinforce Islam" (2005, 80). Arab-Indonesians were known as teachers and proselytizers of Islam for centuries. To this day they hold important roles in Islamic communities in Indonesia and are often described as "*soleh*" (pious). In addition, early Arab-Indonesian *gambus* performers incorporated a number of *sholawat* religious texts, solidifying the association of Arab-Indonesian music performances with Islamic expression. Nizar describes,

> They were already familiar with song "A" for example, from the era of Segaf Assegaf. Of course (Segaf's) Islamic poems praised Muhammad, poems that were of undeniable religious character. Then when the same style of sound (gambus) surfaced again, this time introduced by me, they thought I was an Islamic singer, but that's not true.[20]

Many Arab-Indonesian *orkes gambus* musicians themselves, such as Nizar, deny their adopted role as religious singers and symbols. However, their association (as Arabs) with Islam nevertheless remains strong.

Arab Aesthetics, Islamic Authenticity, and Musical Modernity

As technology and transportation have increased over the past century, contact with Mecca and with Arab culture has sharply risen. For many Indonesian Muslims, Mecca is the one area of the world with which they most closely identify; it is the spiritual homeland of Islam toward which all Muslims pray. With a rise in pilgrimages to Mecca, Indonesians have shown increased identification with and nostalgia for Arab culture, which has grown into a marker of Islamic authenticity. As Rasmussen (2005, 85) notes: "Arab music ... is a powerful index of the original place and time of Islam that 'outranks' Indonesian genres in its efficacy to express authentic spirituality." Arab music remains a strong symbol of the geographic center of Islam.

In fact, over the past decades, trends of "Arabization" in Indonesian Islamic culture may be seen in language use, clothing, and even in architecture. Words such as *ustaz* (teacher), *madrasa* (school), and *sholat* (worship), which have strict Islamic connotations in Indonesia (as well as in other non-Arab countries), have no such singularly Islamic affiliation in the Arab world where they are used amongst all religious groups. Use of the headscarf (known as *jilbab* in Indonesia), which is "not really Islamic ... but is instead Arab," is more common now than a few decades ago (Brenner 1996, 674). And modern buildings, even the famous Istiqlal Mosque in the national capital, Jakarta, exhibit Middle Eastern arch and dome forms, forms that Hugh O'Neil (1993, 162) describes as "alien 'pan-Islamic' forms" in Southeast Asia.

As easily as the Arab sound may be interpreted as Islamic, so too, the "sound of the West" may be interpreted to be non-Islamic. An example of this association comes from an interview with the Malaysian *nasyid* group Raihan published in an Indonesian Islamic journal, *Khasanah Sabili*. The text is as follows:

> Khasanah Sabili:
> What is Raihan's opinion of Islamic poems that are set to melodies that sound non-Islamic?

> Nazrey Johani (member of *nasyid* group Raihan):
> Actually it's not a problem, but we must not do too many adaptations from those sources. This is because a Muslim must create something pure. The way he performs his ablutions, worships, then prays to Allah in order to create a song—that's where it comes from. Of course it isn't wrong for us to adopt some Western sounds, but don't do too much of that. For the Islamic community that wants to promote Islam, it must be authentic. (*Khasanah Sabili* 13(IX), 12)[21]

Nazray Johani goes on to state that *nasyid* is open to everyone and can incorporate all types of sound. However, the question and answer illustrate the important role of sonic symbolism in Islamic arts in Indonesia, and shows how important musical aesthetics are in the definition of appropriate and authentic Islamic expression. Musical sound itself is a marker of religious and cultural identity; in this case, Western musical aesthetics are identified as non-Islamic sound.

The interview excerpt also suggests that artists choose specific sounds in order to affiliate and solidify their identity as part of the Islamic *umma* (community). Rasmussen (2005, 66) describes how Arab Islamic singing can be seen as the "global or international musical system of Islam." The adoption of the Arab sound can represent an affiliation with the global Islamic world in opposition to the global Western world. *Orkes gambus* music—as an Arab-associated genre—and *orkes gambus'* Arabic lyrics have become, for many, another aspect of pan-Islamic identity and affiliation with the Arab world (as a predominantly Muslim region) and Islam.

The use of culture to mark religious, cultural, and political affiliation is not new, of course. Kees van Dijk (2002, 58) describes a "selective adaptation" of culture in the early 20th Century Dutch Indies, where one who wore a Turkish fez was clearly signifying that they were loyal to the Turks and not the Dutch. Selective adaptation occurs in music as well. Global accessibility to Arab culture over the past decades has led to the adoption of global media, such as Arab popular music recordings, that are filtered into Indonesia and adapted into modern *orkes gambus* music as symbols of a global, rather than local, identity and alliance.

With Indo pop groups pounding out hits that sound similar to Coldplay and U2, identifying with the Arab sound is also a means of connecting with the global world and modernizing without assimilating modern, commercial Western culture. In her work on Javanese women and veiling practices, Brenner (1996) remarks that the use of Arab-styled clothing challenges Western models of modernity. She states: "By identifying with the international Islamic community, Indonesian activists validate their sense of being part of the modern world without the need to adapt a Westernized way of life" (Brenner 1996, 678).

Arab sounds can function in the way that fashion does by offering an alternative to Western models of artistic and popular modernity.

Of course, the acceptance of the Arab sound is not universal across Indonesia. *Orkes gambus* and things Arab can be rejected as foreign elements that unfairly challenge local culture. In the Gorontalo region, for example, local artists become offended when their local *dana-dana* art is referred to as *zamrah* (another spelling of *samrah*), a term most frequently used to denote Arab-Indonesian *orkes gambus*. As Farha Daulima described to me, the assumption of Muslims in general is that the center of Islamic culture is the Arab world. However, she goes on to say

> …but if we copy Arab culture, I'm not saying it is wrong, but it would be best if we take Arab culture and fill it with Gorontalo nuances.…It depends on how we negotiate between Arab culture and our culture. It's not necessary that we use songs in Arabic … local artists aren't focused on copying Arab culture but are focused on modifying arts to have an Islamic feel but not always using Arabic language. *Pantun* here don't use Arabic. Unless we are reading from the Qur'an or reading *zikir*; then, we use Arabic.[22]

Local Islamic expressive arts are forced to negotiate with not only the strong weight of national culture in Indonesia, but also with the strong influence of the Arab idiom and international Islamic modernity.

"Purifikasi/Arabisasi Islam" and "Pribumisasi Islam"

The simultaneous acceptance and rejection of Arab culture in Indonesian Islamic expressive arts cannot be separated from recent debates among Islamic scholars and leaders in Indonesia over what has been labeled "pribumisasi Islam" (indigenized Islam) versus "purifikasi/Arabisasi Islam" (purification/Arabization of Islam).

Indonesian Islam is by no means simple to define. Islamic practices across the archipelago vary, and there are many different regional types and forms of Islamic religious practice, many with local syncretic components. Some common syncretic religious practices include *tahlilan* and *salawatan*, religious ceremonies that involve the reading of praises (*puji-pujian*) to Muhammad and the burning of *dupa* (incense, considered a relic of pre-Islamic Hinduism in Indonesia). In 20th-century Indonesia, a rise in Hajj pilgrimages and thus increased contact with Saudi Arabian Islam led to the spread of new *aliran* (or sects) of Islam in Indonesia and thus influenced Indonesian Islam. One such *aliran* was Wahhabism, a Saudi Arabian form of Islamic practice that focuses on a strict adherence to the Qur'an

and the Sunna (the actions and behavior of the Prophet Mohammad during his lifetime, which are considered exemplary) particularly when modeling proper Islamic behavior and practice. Under such strict adherence to these core Islamic texts, syncretic practices (including *tahlilan* and *salawatan*) would not be allowed, as they are not mentioned in the Qur'an and they did not take place during the life of the Prophet Muhammad. In 20th-century Indonesia, Islamic organizations, such as Muhammadiyah, that were influenced by Wahhabist trends, rejected these practices, claiming that these indigenous-influenced practices went too far from the examples set in the Qur'an and Sunna.[23]

In reaction to this "*purifikasi* Islam" (purification of Islam),[24] a term used to describe it by its critics, some Islamic thinkers promoted a counter-movement labeled "*pribumisasi* Islam" (indigenization of Islam). The term was even used by the former president of the Indonesian Republic, Abdurrahman Wahid, head of the Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Under *pribumisasi* Islam, local Islamic practices from different regions in Indonesia are promoted in an effort to unite Muslims in the nation-state. As Abdul Mun'im describes, under *pribumisasi* Islam,

> All local Islamic forms can show their Islamic-ness in a manner compatible with their customs. In this case, Islamic-ness is united with Indonesian-ness, not only from the point of view of custom and tradition, but also in terms of political thought and aspiration that are oriented toward the nation, not Islamic-ness (Munim 2003, 4).

Under such a system, local Islamic traditions gain respect and legitimacy, rather than being labeled "*sesat, musryik, atau bid'ah*" ("misled, polytheist, or heresy") (Munim 2003, 7). Proponents of *pribumisasi* Islam often justify their position by drawing examples from the highly respected and admired wali sanga of Indonesia, who are considered the first men to bring Islam to the island of Java. Often mythologized, their graves remain holy Islamic sites in Indonesia today.[25] During their proselytization of Java, it is said that the *wali sanga* used Javanese culture, such as *wayang kulit* and the *gamelan*, to promote their teachings (see Rahmat 2003, 10–11). M. Imdadun Rahmat, in his defense of *pribumisasi* Islam uses the example of the *wali sanga* to justify the use of local culture in Islamic expression: "The *Wali Songo* [wali sanga] were successful in combining local values with an Islam that is characteristically Indonesian" (Rahmat 2003, 10).

In their rejection of the *purifikasi* Islam, critics often cite that by demanding that Indonesian Islam adhere to the pure form of Islam found in the Sunna texts, in essence they are demanding that Indonesians adopt Arab culture and traditions. Rahmat confirms that, "As opposed to Wahhabism or the movement to

purify Islam that hopes to plant local Arab traditions in Indonesian soil, indigenous Islam makes a serious effort to translate the core teachings of Islam into local Indonesian cultures (2003, 19). *Pribumisasi* Islam proponents argue that by demanding a purification of Islam that relies on the adoption of Arab Islamic traditions and practices, purists claim that whatever is not Arab is not Islamic.[26] The process of *purifikasi* Islam, therefore, is also referred to as "Arabisasi."[27]

These critics of an Arabization of Islam in Indonesia offer many examples of how the purist/Wahhabi influence has already crept into Indonesian Islamic culture. Munim describes the phenomenon of women wearing a *jilbab* (Islamic head scarf). According to Munim (2003, 6), girls went from wearing traditional regional Islamic headscarf styles (often called *kerudung*) to wearing monotone Arab-styled headscarves, which removed all expressive characteristics of the regional Islamic headscarf style.[28] Munim also offers examples of two separate Islamic events in Indonesia, a national *zikir* program, and an NU-sponsored prayer reading, called *Istighotsah*. In the *zikir* event, the participants wearing a *jubah* (an Arab-style head covering) indicated the Arab orientation (*orientasi Arab*) of the event and implied a rejection of regional clothing styles.[29] At the *Istighotsah* event, participants wore local Islamic clothing styles, which Munim interprets as an implication of pluralism, one of the core national themes of the Indonesian Republic:

> They pray ... for the safety of the nation. Their style of clothing mirrors the diversity of cultures in Indonesia. All may appear together at once. Although the cultural expressions that appear are different, they are thought of as already fulfilling the aspirations of Islam. Pluralism is not only compatible with Islamic culture but also tolerance with local culture and customs of other non-Islamic communities, as the consequence from understanding nationality, national solidarity becomes high, until every citizen of the nation has the same right and duty without consideration of ethnicity, religion and political ideology (Munim 2003, 3–4).

The use of Arab symbols in Indonesian Islamic expression, therefore, is not something that has gone unnoticed in Indonesian Islamic circles. These critics of pure, or Arab, forms of Islam, and the symbols used to express affiliation with Arab culture, seek to promote Indonesian Islam as a legitimate and important part of the history of Islam, rather than emphasizing only that Arab Islam was an important part of the history of Indonesia. Munim (2003, 7) declares that Indonesian cultural heritage is an element of Islamic cultural heritage as a whole and is therefore undeniably legitimate.[30] As such debates of the role of foreign cultural elements in

Indonesian Islamic expression continue, the prominence and prestige of Arab symbols (such as Arab music) in Indonesian Islamic arts is likely to change.[31]

Critiques of the heavy influence of Arab culture on non-Arab Islamic societies are not confined to Indonesia, and the use of Arab culture in Islamic practice is a point of tension in other non-Arab Islamic cultures. In an Internet article titled "Stop 'Arabising' Malay culture," the author offers a comment by Malaysian Arts, Culture and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim. Minister Yatim notes:

> The Malays are not Arabs. Therefore, it is important that we do not "Arabise" the Malay culture to the extent that everything that the Arabs do, we must do....That's not to say I hold contra-views against the Arab culture. In fact, the Arab world has many aspects that have benefited and enriched the world in terms of medicine, art, poetry and so on....But the community should not be influenced to the extent that they are blinded into thinking that all that is Arabic is good for them (Wong 2004).

Minister Yatim goes on to defend Malaysian traditions such as *wayang kulit* that had been criticized as non-Islamic. He notes: "We just, in chorus, say 'Aha, perhaps so' but we never fight back to say that this is a deep-rooted tradition of the Malays since time immemorial. 'Put to us which (Islamic) tenet is being violated.' Nobody says that" (Wong 2004). The minister further promises to "put on the map again what was lost," referring to traditional arts (Wong 2004).

The discourse on Islamic culture in other non-Arab Muslim nations also reflects a tendency to reject modern Islamic fundamentalism in defense of cultural specificity. In an Internet posting "Islam and Bangladesh: A Non-Arab Muslim majority country," Barun ur Rashid notes: "The purpose of this paper is to show by an empirical analysis that the overwhelming majority of Bangladeshi Muslims are tolerant with people of other faiths because of the deeply held secular values, culture and traditions of the land" (Rashid 2005). In forming his argument, Rashid uses cultural examples to stress that Bangladeshi Muslims have not wholeheartedly adopted Arab culture in place of their own. He states:

> While we recite the Quranic verses in Arabic, we understand the meaning of the verses through our mother language....Music and dance by girls are perceived as respectable profession calling in Bangladesh. Although Bengali Muslims are steadfast in their faith, some of the social practices they perform are influenced by local culture (Rashid 2005).

Rashid asserts that Bengali Muslims remain pious Muslims through their local-based faith.

Conclusion

Orkes gambus music has been portrayed to me as an art form of Muslim Arabs in Indonesia that has been adopted as an art form for Indonesian Muslims in general. To some Indonesian Muslims, it is considered a form of popular Islamic expression. To other Indonesian Muslims, it is merely entertainment music. *Orkes gambus* is not an art form that has a clearly defined influence on Indonesian Islamic life or practice, but rather it remains a vague, casual, and even flexible symbol in Indonesian Islamic culture open to diverse Muslims to accept or reject on their own terms.

Although many argue that *orkes gambus* has no place in Indonesian Islamic arts, for the time being it is still a member of the club. The future of *orkes gambus* is not certain, however. While it remains a solid element in Arab-Indonesian community celebration, new forms of the music are emerging outside of Arab communities. One such form is *hajir marawis*, which draws on the styles of *orkes gambus* styles but with different instrumentation and the religious texts of *sholawat*. Perhaps the problematic position of *orkes gambus* in Indonesian Islamic arts is becoming resolved by the adoption of new genres that more closely reflect the traditional *sholawat* forms of *orkes gambus* as performed by the late Segaf Assegaf.

Orkes gambus music, when accepted into the Islamic realm, remains a powerful symbol of the religious prestige ascribed to Arab culture in Indonesian Islamic arts. However, the fact that it is also rejected by many illustrates a struggle within Indonesian Islam to legitimate and distinguish itself culturally in the international Islamic community. As the largest nation of Muslims in the world, Indonesia today stands ready to play a major role in the changing face of international Islamic artistic expression.

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Notes

1. Nizar Ali, interview (Surabaya, May 4, 2006). Please see my dissertation (Berg 2007) for the original language of all quotations.

2. The term *gambus* is also used as a general term to denote a plucked instrument. The Indonesian language bible uses the term in its translation of Psalm 108, 2, "Bangunlah, hai

gambus dan kecapi, aku mau membangunkan fajar." *Alkitab* (Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 1990), 672. The English version of this psalm is: "Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn." *The Holy Bible, New International Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1978), 691. This phrase is also used in Psalm 57: 8.

3. Charles Capwell (1995, 81) suggests that these traditional *gambus* instruments were replaced by the Egyptian *'ud* around the time Egyptian film was widely disseminated throughout Southeast Asia. Poché notes that in recent decades the Yemeni *qanbus* has had to compete with the strong influence of the *'ud* in Yemen (Poché 1984, 169). Phillip Schuyler also notes that the Yemeni lute, the *turbi*, has also been replaced by the Egyptian '*ud* in recent years (Schuyler 1990, 60). Egyptianization, therefore, struck the Arab world as well as Southeast Asia.

4. These distinctions are similar to *zapin* genres in Malaysia as discussed by Nor (1993, 1): *zapin melayu* and *zapin arab*.

5. *Orkes gambus* is also sometimes simply called *gambus*, causing it to be confused with regional *gambus* music genres.

6. There is a dance genre called *zafin* found in Oman and noted by Yūsuf Shawqī (1994), however its description does not correspond with the *zafin* dance/music genre in Southeast Asia. Rasmussen, who has witnessed *zafin* (also *zapin*, *jepin*) dancing among performing *gambus* groups in Jakarta, has seen similar dance styles involving a pair of men, dancing side by side with graceful moves up and back and dramatic jumps to the ground among Yemeni communities in Detroit (Rasmussen, personal communication).

7. Charles Capwell (1995) noted that, in the 1990s during his research on *gambus*, most lyrics were in the Indonesian language. It is indeed the opposite today; almost all *orkes gambus* songs are in Arabic. In recent years, however, some *orkes gambus* groups in Madura have been transliterating popular Arabic language *orkes gambus* songs in to the Madurese language. An example of this is the recent recording titled "*Aeng Mata*" ("Tears") by the group O.G.M. El-Mira Sani. The letters O.G.M. stand for *Orkes Gambus Madura*. The use of local language is a new trend, and I have only witnessed it with the Madurese language.

8. I was informed that the Arabic transcription of this song incorrectly divides Arabic words, and in performance the Arabic is not pronounced correctly, suggesting that the performers were not fluent in the Egyptian dialect of Arabic used in this song. An Egyptian friend (Mahmoud El-Hamrawi), who listened to a number of *orkes gambus* songs with me, stated that the Arabic is pronounced with a Gulf/Yemeni accent.

9. This mosque was renovated in 1993. The original mosque was a traditional Javanese-style tiered model. The head of the Arab community in Manado informed me that the choice of a Turkish style for the new mosque was made after looking at a book of Middle Eastern architecture, and that it was not the result of any relationships between members of the Arab community and Turkish citizens or descendents in Indonesia.

10. *Malam bedaka* has been described to me as a unique tradition of North Sulawesi Arabs. There is a similar tradition known as *malam pacar* (henna night) in the Arab communities of East Java. This term should not be confused with the ethnic Javanese tradition, *malam bidadari*, which incorporates ceremonial bathing, etc.; this is not part of *malam pacar* traditions.

11. This is also known as *samar* in certain Arab Indonesian communities. The word derives from the same Arabic root "رمسد" which, among its meanings, is a night of conversation and entertainment.

12. Survey entry, October 2005.

13. Recent historical and anthropological findings on Arab-Indonesian communities include studies by Engseng Ho, edited volumes by Ulrike Freitag and William Clarence Smith, and books by Azyumardi Azra, Huub de Jonge, and Natalie Mobini-Keshesh, among others. Michael Gilsenan of New York University has also been conducting work on the subject of Hadrami Arab descendents in Southeast Asia.

14. Arabs, along with Chinese and Indian descendents, were labeled "*Vreemde Oosterlingen*" ("Foreign Easterners") under Dutch colonial law and were required to live in ethnic ghettos known as *wijkenstelsel* administered by ethnic captains (*kapiten*). Ghetto citizens were required to apply for travel permits if they wanted to travel outside of metropolitan areas. Although the ghetto system was abolished in the early 20th century, Dutch laws categorizing Arab-Indonesians as "Foreign Easterners" (such as the *Indische Staatsregeling* 163) remained in effect even up to and during the New Order era following Indonesian independence. Huub de Jonge, in his study of these ethnic quarter systems (1997, 99), notes that the Dutch established ethnic quarters in the cities of Manado and Gorontalo in 1894. The Arab community of Manado was given the name "Kampoeng Arab" under Dutch colonization and was known under that official name after Dutch rule came to an end. It was only during the Suharto era that the name was changed to "Kampung Istiqlal" in an attempt to wipe away the ethnic association of the original name. In Manado, the name of the Chinese community, "Kampung Cina," was changed to "Kelurahan Calaca" during the New Order as well, removing its ethnic connotations.

15. The Indonesian title of the program was "Mantapkan Kerukunan dan Solidaritas antar Umat Beragama."

16. Nizar Ali, interview (Surabaya, May 4, 2006).

17. Haddad Alwi, interview (Manado, October 26, 2005).

18. Farha Daulima, interview (Gorontalo, July 25, 2005).

19. In recent years, in fact, the province of Gorontalo, for which Ibu Daulima works, has been promoting itself as the center of Islam in Eastern Indonesia. In a seminar titled "National Seminar for the Development of Islamic Culture in Eastern Indonesia," the governor of Gorontalo, Fadel Muhammad, commented "in this era of local autonomy we aim to make Gorontalo the base of Islamic Culture in Eastern Indonesia." The labeling of *gambus* and *dana-dana* regional arts as Islamic culture therefore is also part of this larger government-sponsored program to promote the newly independent province within the Indonesian Republic. H. Nani Tultoli et al eds, *Gorontalo 2003: Seminar Nasional Pengembangan Kebudayaan Islam Kawasan Timur Indonesia* (Gorontalo: Pusat Penelitian dan Pengkajian, 2004), XI.

20. "Nizar Ali, interview (Surabaya, May 4, 2006).

21. D. Taringan et al., "Ngobrol Bareng Raihan: Kami Bernyanyi dengan Hati" (Khasanah Sabili 13(IX)), 12.

22. Farha Daulima, interview (Gorontalo, July 25, 2005). *Zikir* (or *dhikr*) are devotional prayers to God and are in the Arabic language.

23. Some mosques do not use the *bedug* barrel drum in heavily Muhammadiyah (or nowadays heavily "modernist") influenced areas. In an interview, Delmus Salim, professor at the State Institute of Islamic Studies in Manado, told me that in his home city of Padang, for instance, *bedug*s are rarely used. The choice to use or not use the *bedug* is influenced by who is the imam and if that person allows *bedug*s. The argument against the use of *bedug*s is based in the fact that they were used in pre-Islamic times with different sounds for different situations (if someone died, if someone was born, etc.). This pre-Islamic association of the *bedug* made it susceptible to criticism by Muhammadiyah.

24. "Purification or perfection of Islamic teaching especially that which was aggressively fought for by the Wahabi movement was fervently against any appreciation of local customs and traditions." (Munim 2003, 6).

25. I was fortunate to visit the cemetery of the *wali sanga* known as Sunan Ampel in Surabaya. His grave is located in what is now the Arab quarter of the city. While I was there, there was a large parade and several days of prayers marking the birthday of Sunan Ampel. Many local Javanese Muslims sat and prayed in front of Sunan Ampel's grave, one form of Islamic sycretic practice in Indonesia that is highly criticized by "purifikasi Islam" proponents, as such practice of grave worship exhibits pre-Islamic influence.

26. "It's the same case with traditional arts. Standards of custom are already dominated by Islamic standards from the Arab world. At the same time, what isn't Arab is not thought of as Islamic." (Munim 2003, 6)

27. Rahmat notes that "Arabization, or the process of identifying oneself with Middle Eastern culture, has already torn us from the roots of our own culture." (Rahmat 2003, 9).

He also notes that "Purification of Islam, that rejects all local flavor from Islam, in the end a process of Javanization and Melayuization has changed into the process of Arabization." (Munim 2003, 5).

28. Munim notes, "The jilbab phenomenon is everywhere…monotone, tidy and simple, only covering the aurat (in the manner of Arab Islam) and almost without any appreciation for the aesthetic dimension of clothing that is expressed through the use of local Islamic clothing." (Munim 2003, 6)

29. Munim remarks "Wearing the jubah, (Arab clothing) indicates that one is oriented toward Arab-ness." (Munim 2003, 3).

30. "This also assumes that the legacy of Indonesian culture legitimately is part of the legacy of Islamic culture. Indonesian historical experience, from pre-Islam to the time of Islam, needs to be integrated into Islamic history itself." (Munim 2003, 7).

31. In fact, new genres of Southeast Asian popular Islamic arts, such as *nasyid*, help define regional Islamic identities. Artists such as Raihan unite Southeast Asian Muslim audiences, offering what Barendregt describes as "a unique regional transculturalism" and "a style of communication that has attached with its consumption a growing transnational consciousness" (Barendregt 2006, 172). The growing popularity of *nasyid* in Indonesia clearly challenges trends in Arabization and reliance on Arab idioms to express Islamic-ness. However, at the same time, the genre avoids any reference to locality, by

avoiding the use of any local Islamic art references, beyond the occasional use of *rebana* drums. This Southeast Asian transnational music, therefore, lies in an undefined space between "*Arabisasi*" and "*pribumisasi*."

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8

The Discourse on Islam and Music in West Java, with Emphasis on the Music Group, Ath-Thawaf

Wim van Zanten

Wim Van Zanten's chapter addresses the elements that allow a contemporary composition to be considered both Islamic and regional in West Java, the area known as Sunda. He first explores the general debates on music and Islam in Indonesia and those circulating in West Java, and then focuses a case study of the topic around the contemporary band, Ath-Thawaf. The first half of the chapter reveals how special verse forms, such as macapat, *became affixed to a variety of ritual events and were used to spread Islamic teachings throughout the West Java region. Van Zanten asserts that, while religious music has become more prominent in public life since 1980, most people in West Java have considered music and other performing arts from West Java as compatible with Islam. Some intellectuals hold the view that music and art should not be judged solely in religious terms as forbidden (*haram*) and permitted (*halal*), but also in terms of the aesthetical values of beautiful and ugly. The chapter answers the important question "What makes the music produced in the Sundanese soundscape Islamic?" through the Islam-inspired music of Ath-Thawaf, which combines Sundanese cultural elements with global music elements and Islamic themes. This band's music provides a context for examining the various ways that Sundanese Muslims, musicians, and intellectuals view music and its potential uses. The group and its leader, Yus Wiradiredja, are connected to the performing arts institute (STSI) in Bandung, thus the group's cultural expressions have tacit regional sanction, are widely acceptable, and begin to define how a modern form of hybridized music can be interpreted as Islamic. Van Zanten looks at the music and notes from their recordings, explores Wiradiredja's words and ideas, and analyzes a composed version of the Islamic confession of faith to illustrate the aesthetics and elements that create a modern Islamic music in West Java.*

Some General Observations and Methodological Issues

Clifford Geertz begins his book *Islam Observed* with the remark that the religious dimension of the "uncertain revolutions" in Asia and Africa is the most difficult to grasp. "It is not, for the most part, illuminated by the instructive explosions that mark political development: purges, assassinations, coups d'état, border wars, riots, and here and there an election" (Geertz 1968, 1). Today, it might seem as if these words have been turned upside-down. Since the September 11, 2001, destruction of the World Trade Center in New York by the deliberate crashing of civil aviation planes, many Western political leaders tell us that we are living in a world that is constantly threatened by Islamic terrorists. It seems that ever since that tragedy, most purges, assassinations, coups d'état, and so on, immediately point to the religious dimension of a revolution rather than to the socioeconomic developments and unequal power structures, which are no longer sufficient as rationales. The religious element, now, is very much emphasized.

However, in Indonesia—like in other countries—the position of Islamic groups is also based on socioeconomic issues, not just on religious issues. For instance, after the communist party (PKI) and its organizations had been crushed in 1965–1966 (see Introduction to this volume), Islamic groups took over one of the main roles of the PKI: demanding social justice (*keadilan sosial*). In the 1970s, as performer Rhoma Irama's star was rising, he sang his songs about Islam and pointed to social injustice in the popular music genre, *dangdut* (see, for instance, the texts in *Music of Indonesia*, Volume 2, 1991, and Weintraub in this collection).

There are several issues to be taken into consideration in our discussion of Islam in the Indonesian context. First, like "identity," "ethnic group," and "culture," "Islam" is a constructed concept in a discourse and not an intrinsic quality of a group or category. The construction of Islamic identity has to be seen as a process that takes place when groups interact, when cultural differences are made relevant by social interaction.[1] The differences between the religious identities "Islam" and "Christianity" have been highlighted much more in the world after September 11, 2001, than in the second half of the 20th century when Geertz wrote his landmark book, *The Religion of Java* (1960). The increased emphasis on the role of religion can be observed for different groups within Indonesia, and also for the interactions between groups in a globalized world.

Second, in present studies and public discussions about the position of Islam, the burden of the colonial past is still with us. In the "oriental" scholarly tradition, scholars preferred to look almost exclusively at texts that were considered to

have authority, and tended to neglect the real practices of human beings. For example, an article on the recitation of two holy texts in West Java ("The Miracles of Abdulqadir al-Jaelani" and "The *Burda* of al-Bûsîrî") by Millie and Syihabuddin (2005) starts with some methodological remarks on the work of the Dutch scholar, Drewes. The authors show that "Drewes moves from written text to written text, from author to author, and from one institution responsible for producing and storing written text to another." The inhabitants of West Java are significant in Drewes' schema "but any actual practice of theirs, other than writing, is peripheral and need not be examined" (Millie and Syihabuddin 2005, 104–105). Such an approach, relying only on written texts, may be of limited use for studying religion; it is certainly inadequate for understanding oral traditions and the performing arts.

A third problem in discussing the subject of Islam in Indonesia is that the diversity of forms is not always recognized. It has been repeatedly declared that Indonesian Islam is not the same as Islam in the Middle East. In a posthumous article, Brakel (2004, 6) asserts that "all religions have a previous history, and they all represent some sort of syncretism." Islam came to Indonesia mainly via India, where it had already acquired syncretic characteristics, "not only through its relation with the Indian religions, but also internally, since in India more than anywhere else Sunnite and Shi'ite elements had merged" (Brakel 2004, 9). When Islam started to establish itself in Indonesia around 1300 CE, "it already possessed a largely fixed doctrinal structure, so that it was received in a fairly closed state. [...] While [...] outside East and Central Java Islam mainly had to deal with indigenous ancestral customs, in Java it was subjected to extensive re-interpretation in a speculative-mystical sense" (Ibid, 10). Although Brakel restricts himself here to the Javanese of East and Central Java, much of what he says applies to the Sundanese people of West Java as well.

Brakel (Ibid, 12) points out that major sections of the Javanese population do not wish to identify themselves completely as part of the Islamic community, and profess a religious variant called Javanese religion (*agama Jawa*) that also contains many Shaivite ideas. He does not agree with Geertz' "attempt to divide Javanese society into three classes," in which besides the nobility, there is a strictly Islamic minority named *putihan* (white-coloured ones) or *santri*, and a majority named *abangan* (red or brown-colored ones) (see Geertz 1960). Brakel sees these distinctions as a kind of continuum. When conflicts arise, it then becomes a question of whether one gives priority to "Javanese" or to "Islamic" values. Ricklefs (2006), however, argues that Javanese society started to become polarized in the *putihan/abangan* (pious Muslims/those who do not carry out the Islamic obligations) dichotomy of the 1850s to 1880s. In this period "we see the historical roots of what would, by the 1960s, become a social conflict with

bloody consequences." He wonders what is happening now and what will happen in the future: Do social polarities grow or decline (Ricklefs 2006, 53)?

Trance and mysticism are part of the performing arts of the Javanese and Sundanese, embedded in the puppet play (*wayang*), the gamelan orchestra, masked dances, and trance performances, often affiliated with the context of ritual meals. Despite some misgivings in orthodox Muslim circles, these arts are still accepted today. For instance, the *bangbarongan* animal (horse) mask and entranced dancers on hobbyhorses made of leather (*kuda lumping*) continue to be seen in West Java (see Figure 1). The trance takes place during the processions of boys who are to be circumcised in the Islamic way the following day.[2]

To further this idea of preservation of traditional arts, the sung poetry of *tembang* Sunda *Cianjuran* music is "firmly anchored in the tradition of mysticism: it is *tapa di nagara*" (practicing asceticism "in the kingdom"), that is, mystical practice conducted not by seclusion but rather by doing things properly in daily life (van Zanten 1989, 72, 79).

Harnish (2003, 112) describes how the people in Lombok see w*ayang Sasak*, which probably emerged in the 18th or 19th century, "not a distraction from Islam . . . [but as] both a local expression of Islam and culture." He mentions the "modern" *wayang*, which "de-emphasizes the mystical aspects and accentuates humour and secular entertainment: this style, because of its less ritualized

Figure 8.1. *Kuda lumping* dancer and *bangbarongan* horse mask. Ujungberung, Bandung, October 29, 1990 (photo by author)

orientation, is more acceptable to orthodox Muslims" (Harnish 2003, 107). Kartomi (2005, 30) mentions that some Acehnese authors consider pre-Islamic genres on the whole as *sumbang* (wrong, off-track), and such genres are dismissed as mystical; however, they do not reject those non-Islamic genres "to which Muslim phrases or songs of praise have been added." These examples from different parts of Indonesia indicate that the discourse is rather about the *degree* of acceptability of trance and mysticism in the performing arts rather than casting these practices in the absolute terms of "acceptable" and "not acceptable."

Indonesian Voices: "Indigenous Islam"

In his book of essays on the cultural crisis in present-day Indonesia, Saini (2004, 25) points out that a religion is always "coloured" by the local culture and historical time in which its followers live. Therefore Islam, like other religions, is never monolithic. Probably also triggered by the events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, these ideas are now also reflected in many other books, articles in journals, and essays in newspapers, in which Indonesian authors stress that Islam in Indonesia differs from Islam in the Middle East.[3] These authors want Indonesia to avoid a strong "Arabic orientation" (*orientasi Arabisme*) in which clothes (especially the *jilbab* veil) and words should be "Arabic," such as using the Arabic word *shalat* (five daily prayers) instead of the common Indonesian word *sembahyang* (Abdul Mun'im 2003, 3). Indonesia has its own forms of Islam that are flavored by the local cultures. Abdul Mun'im (Ibid, 8) advocates that the scientific debate on Islam should be based on empirical reality (*sumbur yang bersifat waqî'iy*); the argumentation based on reason (*akal*) and revelation (*wahyu*) should be abandoned.

Imdadun Rahmat *et al.* (2003, 9) underscore the many forms of Islam, including Islam in Indonesia (*Islam pribumi*, indigenous Islam). The problem facing indigenous Islam, Rahmat argues, is the claim for universalism and authenticity that leads inevitably to Islamic fundamentalism. Like many other Indonesian authors, he does not support the claim that pure Islam has to be found in Arabic countries (Ibid, 11,13). Such authors stress that in the Indonesian context the right Islam is the one that understands the needs of the Indonesians, their problems, and the challenges to come, without changing the essence of Islamic teaching (Ibid, 18–19). Islam in Southeast Asia has a special character: Overall, it is tolerant, moderate, and inclusive (*inklusif*: not excluding non-Muslims or indigenous Indonesian practices and ideologies). Moreover, it is more culturally than politically oriented. An Islamic nation-state is not the model for the country. Indonesia is and should remain a nation where there is no privilege for the adherers of a specific religion.[4] The Indonesian "nation-state with a democratic system

gives enough opportunity to make it a nation of Islamic people (*negara yang Islami*), that is, a nation that can protect the wellbeing of its citizens, including non-Muslims, so that their civil rights can be fully fulfilled, including the right to express their religion in all aspects" (Ibid, 31–32).

Music in the context of Indonesian Islam

The position of music and other performing arts in Islam has been debated almost from the start in the 7th century CE, as has been demonstrated beautifully in the book by Amnon Shiloah (1995). In a later article, Shiloah (1997, 144) remarks, "One of the major difficulties encountered in dealing with the question of lawfulness is the fact that the most sacred text, the Qur'an, contains almost nothing expressly concerning music." Therefore, the other authoritative sources, the Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet), were used, "which in the course of time acquired the force of law." Shiloah concludes his discussion on the lawfulness of music this way: "Many *hadīth* were ambivalent, however, and could be interpreted both ways. Moreover, many were forged, so it was impossible to reach any unanimous conclusion" (Shiloah 1997, 155).

As society changes, viewpoints may also change, in spite of holy texts and commentaries written many centuries ago. To use Geertz' (1968, 19) words:

> Whatever God may or may not be—living, dead or merely ailing—religion is a social institution, worship a social activity, and faith a social factor. To trace the patterns of their changes is neither to collect relics of revelation nor to assemble a chronicle of error. It is to write a social history of the imagination.

In Indonesia, the debate on the position of the performing arts, its performers, women, and the recording of the human voice has been vigorous. At the end of the 19th century, most Muslim leaders in Indonesia reacted negatively to audio recordings of Quranic chant, in particular to recordings of female voices, as these might arouse erotic feelings. Listening to such recordings of Quranic chant was "not recommended" (*mandub*) as these recordings were considered to be only an echo of the live recitation. It was more difficult to decide whether it should be qualified as "forbidden" (*haram*) or as "objectionable" (*makruh*) (Snouck Hurgronje 1923, 443, 445–46).

By the 1920s, there were already recordings of women singing Islamic music. For instance, a disc on Ultraphon (Matr.Nr. 25028; A 60020) features male singing with *gambus* lute of the call for prayer with female answer. In the 1970s,

Figure 8.2. Commercial cassette tape with recitation of Qur'an verses by the young woman, Zuraidih M. Dien from Aceh, who won the national contest (M.T.Q.) for girls in the Province of Aceh, 1981

women's contests for reciting the Qur'an, even in such strongly Islamic provinces as Aceh, were already common (see Figure 8.2; see also Rasmussen 2001, 36–40).

Since the 1950s, the Indonesian government has encouraged women to take part in music in several ways. This strategy to include women has been successful in many parts of Indonesia, where women now play an important role as performers. In West Java, vocalists like Tati Saleh (1944–2006) and Euis Komariah were trained as all-round musicians at the music schools (KOKAR) in the 1950s-1960s, where they also became instrumentalists (Photo 10 in van Zanten 1989, 48; see, for a similar situation in Bali, Harnish 2005, 112–113). Rasmussen (2001, 55, n. 16) reports that one of her consultants, a man whose family ran a religious boarding school (*pondok pesantren)* in South Sumatra, "felt women were, in fact, much better than men at artistic endeavors, especially dance and music." This statement is consistent with what I have found in West Java and West Sumatra. In Sundanese thought, the arts in general and music in particular represent the female aspects of human communication (van Zanten 1994, 86–87). Williams describes the female vocalist as the owner of the stage: "the performance

stage is an increasingly feminized place" (1998, 77). In my film, based on research on the *saluang jo dendang* music of the Minangkabau in West Sumatra, I state, "These days, women vocalists play an important role in expressing these different feelings through their creative use of the song texts. The erotic texts, in particular, offer the opportunity for expressing feelings that are difficult to talk about in daily life" (van Zanten 2002). As a result of aesthetic, commercial, and government efforts, women's participation in the arts has advanced.

Rasmussen (2005, 75) mentions a music cassette with music and speeches about Islam made in the mid-1990s by Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid), the president of Indonesia between November 1999 and July 2001. Gus Dur was the religious leader of the large Nadhlatul Ulama organization, which approves of most music performance. This is another example, contrary to the stance of some Islamic groups, in which music is a seen as a legitimate vehicle for spreading the Islamic faith (*dakwah*), certainly in Java.

While conducting fieldwork in Bandung in March–April 2005, I sought out recent and locally written materials on music and Islam. For this purpose I visited the Islamic University (IAIN) of Ujungberung in the eastern part of Bandung to ask about any student theses on the position of music in Islam. The head librarian responded that he had never seen such theses and that the topic was not really important for IAIN. Music was accepted. It was only the way in which the performers behaved that was part of the ongoing discussions. In Islamic popular music, for instance, the movements of female performers were quite often deemed "not decent." He added that I should look for literature at the conservatory and state universities, and for general discussions about culture in papers and journals.[5]

I did find some interesting articles in *Panggung*, the journal of the academy for dance, music, and theatre (STSI) in Bandung, particularly those written by Deni Hermawan (2000), Enoh (2003), and Suharno (2004). The following summaries outline these scholars' perspectives. Suharno (Ibid, 96) holds the view that anyone may use art (*seni*) for whatever purpose, including a religious purpose. If religion becomes part of the art form, however, the form should not highlight dogmatic texts but rather explain what lies behind those texts. For art used to spread faith (*dakwah*), the religious purpose might not otherwise be achieved and then the expression will not appeal to an audience. Suharno refers to Akh Muzakki's article in *Kompas*, November 18, 2003, to demonstrate the close relation between religion, pop culture, and capitalism (*religiotainment*) (Ibid, 98). Most Islamic leaders have been interested in reaching and converting as many people as possible, and the mass media are an important and practical means to success in this venture. However, this story suggests that there may be dangerous implications. The mass media do not

always educate people to think for themselves, and media may be manipulated by others to achieve their own agendas.

According to Suharno (2004, 100–101), God does not reside solely in holy scriptures, but also in all aspects of life and it is the task of the artist to "read" this presence of God and to reword this into his/her own artistic language. The artist needs "aesthetical sensibility" to carry out this task. Dogmatic texts, as written in holy books, are too black and white for the artist (Ibid, 103). What is needed is a *religious* text/artwork that explains what is behind these dogmatic texts, or reveals what their essence (*sari*) is.

Enoh (2003) presents an overview of the philosophy of art of the Islamic philosopher and poet Iqbal, from Punjab (1877–1938).[6] According to Iqbal, art is first of all functional. It is part of life, and therefore the purpose of art is the same as the purpose of life. For each Muslim, this purpose is "spiritual and material well-being in this world and the after-world [and] compassion for the whole of nature that is under the benevolent protection of Allah."[7] Second, he continues, art is needed to guide human beings. Although Allah will always be a mystery (*tersembunyi*), His characteristics need to be translated as much as possible for human beings, so that these become a guide for their daily lives (Ibid, 7). Third, art is needed for social development. With his/her visionary power (*kekuatan kenabian*), the artist is able to uplift people and show them a wider perspective (Ibid, 8). The real function of art is to bring happiness to the lives of people as a perspective of the after-life. Enoh states: "It is better to stay silent than to sing in a way that makes people sad, dark, touched, and that arouses feelings of death."[8]

According to Iqbal, as interpreted by Enoh, art is subservient to morality. Iqbal advocates that the artist is never satisfied with his/her achievements. An artist should dare to differ from others, with a clear agenda based on universal values. The artist has to become the eye and the heart of the need of the people.[9]

Deni Hermawan (2000, 74–75) identifies a few parameters, used in some of my later discussions, necessary for Sundanese/Indonesian music to be called Islamic; for instance, the tonal material, the use of the voice, and the instruments may be from the Middle East, and the language may be Arabic, but the texts must be inspired by Islam. For Indonesia, he wants to make a distinction between *musik Islam*, that is, (Islamic) music in Indonesia that was imported from the Middle East—like, for example, *gambusan* (see Capwell 1995)[10] and *qasidahan*—and *musik islami*, that is, music with Islamic characteristics. Hermawan asserts that *musik islami* cannot be purely instrumental, because it is only in the vocal part, the sung text, that the Islamic themes can become clear. See Epilogue in this volume; see also Hermawan 2005).

Islamic Music in West Java: Old and New

I now turn to several styles of music in Sunda to determine where they fall on the Islamic music continuum. Different types of solo singing using special verse forms, called *macapat*, Cigawiran, or *beluk*,[11] have been used for Islamic teachings since Islam entered West Java. Some older forms of music inspired by Islam are still actively practiced, and new forms and performance practices are continuously being created, such as Islamic pop music.

In 2002–2003 and 2005, Julian Millie conducted fieldwork in the northern part of Bandung and just north of Bandung on the custom of gathering to seek divine favor (*barokah*) from Allah through the intercession of Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Jaelani (471–561, 1077/78–1166 CE), a saint whose tomb has become a place of veneration in Baghdad (Millie 2003, 1; see also Millie 2006). These intercession gatherings consist roughly of two types: the reading of and reciting of exemplary deeds (*manakiban*; see texts in Sanusi 2003), and the reading and reciting of the book of the Sheikh. These days the gatherings usually last for between one to three and a half hours. Millie (2003, 2) remarks:

> The custom of *manikaban* is widespread and growing at the present time. It is often enacted in the *pesantren* [religious school] milieu, but is most frequently performed in the homes of the followers of the sufi order known as the *Tarik Qadiriyah wa Naqsyabandiyah*, which has its headquarters at Suryalaya, Tasikmalaya, West Java. At present, the number of devotees to this sect is growing in the metropolitan region of Bandung.

In his dissertation, Millie (2006, 2, 81, 92, 194) makes compelling remarks about the delivery of these texts. First, he points to the significance of "the *syukuran* or *selamatan* (ritual meal) as a context that generates specific understandings of narrative texts." Second, the Suryalaya *pesantren* neither encourages nor discourages the use of artistry (*seni*) in the deliverance of the text. For Pak Endang, a well-known performer north of Bandung, "even when using a source text written in prose, [he] sings the text in the *pupuh* melody known as *asmarandana*. [...] His singing helps to make the environment *meriah dan ramai* (joyous and busy), and prevents tedium." As the delivered texts are sacred, the performances derive a quality of sacredness, but it "is at the same time read in ways that are playful, creative and humorous."

A few years ago Radio (RRI) Bandung started broadcasting sung Quranic texts, translated into Sundanese verses by Hidayat Suryalaga (1994). The verses are written in the four commonly used forms (*pupuh*): *kinanti*, *sinom*, *asmarandana,* and *dangdanggula*. These text forms are also used in Cigawiran, *beluk* and *manikaban*. However, the melodies of the radio songs are taken from the *tembang Sunda Cianjuran* repertoire,

which may be described as secular and prestigious. The songs were sung by the regular group of *Cianjuran* musicians at the radio station and recorded for later dissemination. Each day, a part of these Quranic texts, in Sundanese, is broadcast; the text is first read and then sung, as in *beluk* and *manikaban* music. The well-known Sundanese composer Nano S. commented to me that this was an attempt to have conservative Muslims get used to new forms for expressing religious texts.

The Bimbo group, founded in 1967 and based in Bandung, is one of the oldest popular music groups still active in Indonesia. Most of their recorded songs are in the Indonesian language, but some are in Sundanese. In 1985, they stopped recording Western-style pop songs, "because they were disappointed by so many of their albums being plagiarized" (Jurriëns 2004, 137). Nowadays, the Bimbo group is mainly known for its music with Islamic themes, like the modern versions of *qasidah* (*kasidah*). In the song, "Qasidah anak bertanya pada bapaknya" (Qasidah "child asks his father"), created ca. 1985, the band utilizes a Middle Eastern musical flavor (CD *Qasidah Bimbo* 2004). According to Deni Hermawan, this music should be classified as *musik Islam*: "Islamic music" that is imported from the Middle East and adjusted to the local musical scene. On the CD *Taqobbalalloohu Minnaa Waminkum* (2003), on the other hand, Bimbo uses musical elements from West Java, for instance the bamboo flute (*suling*) in the song "Marhaban" (Greetings to the Prophet).

By the 1970s, music with an Islamic message (*dakwah* music, including some popular *dangdut* songs) "turned out to be big commercial business" (Frederick 1982, 129). Rasmussen made a similar observation in 1999, and remarked, "*Seni musik Islam* (Islamic musical art) is seen not as *haram* (forbidden) but as an agreeable agent of *dakwah*, bringing people to, or strengthening the faith of Islam" (Rasmussen 2005, 74–75). Every year, the fasting month of Ramadan is the time for *religiotainment*, when there is a convergence of religion, pop culture, and capitalism. On the VCD, *Pop Ramadhan* (2004[1999], Pop for the fasting month), which typifies this

Tuhan, tempat aku bertedu	God, the place where I shelter
Di mana aku mengeluh dengan segala keluh	Where I complain by the sweat of my face
Tuhan, Tuhan yang Maha Esa	God, the Only God
Tempat aku memuja dengan segala doa	The place I worship with all my prayers
Aku jauh Engkau jauh	[If] I am far away, You are far away
Aku dekat, Engkau dekat	[If] I am nearby, You are nearby
Hati adalah cermin	The heart is a mirror
Tempat pahala dan dosa bertarung	A place where virtues and sins fight

quality, the song "Tuhan" (God) by Sam Bimbo is featured. Sung in a soft, restrained way, the language is Indonesian rather than Sundanese or Arabic.
This is clearly music "with Islamic flavor": words refer directly to Islamic life. Bimbo's text, however, is fairly universal; rather than "Allah," he uses the word "Tuhan," the general word for "God" (or Lord, Sir). The song "Jilbab," sung by Cic Faramida in Indonesian on the same VCD, is a different type of song.

[…] Ingatlah-ingatlah	Remember well
Wahai kaum muslimah	Oh, you Muslim women
Jangan jadikan jilbabmu itu	Let not your veil become
Hanya sebagai hiasan	Just an ornament
Pakailah jilbab	Use the (long robe with a) veil
Tuk menutupi aurat	For covering your nakedness (*aurat*).
Wajib hukumnya	That is compulsory, it is the law,
Seperti wajibnya sholat	Like the daily prayers
Yang lima kali	Five times
Di dalam sehari-semalam	During one whole day.
Mari ikhwan seiman	Come on, sisters in faith,
Kita membiasakan	Let's make it a habit:
Berjilbab setiap saat	Wear always a long robe with a veil,
Rapi, sopan, beadab	Smart, respectable, and refined.
Kau pun nampak lebih cantik	You will also look prettier,
Anggun mempesona	Your elegance will enchant [people]

In the 1970s, most Indonesian women and schoolgirls did not wear a veil in public; this started to become fashionable only in the 1980s, and now the majority of women wear veils. Although the words in "Jilbab" are pious, the images portrayed in the music video are not really pious. These show women and girls in proper clothing and with a headscarf (*jilbab*), but, indeed, also depict their elegance and this may—in a modest way—arouse erotic feelings. *Pop Ramadhan* is a *karaoke* VCD, that is, for singing the text yourself to the music: The words are more important than the images. Interestingly, during the instrumental interludes, pictures are shown of a woman playing the violin. Women only rarely play the violin in non-Western, Indonesian music. Violins, like most instruments and especially in live performances, are mostly played by men. This may be an instance of employing an image of modernity (see Barendregt 2006, 173).[12]

Another important new voice in Islamic music is the group Sambasunda, which formed in the second half of the 1990s. Most of the groups' members are

graduates of the Bandung academy of dance, music and theatre (STSI), and some are now teachers at this academy, including the leader, Ismet Ruchimat. The group makes extensive use of musical ideas from all over the world. They have had great success on several tours to foreign countries. On their fourth album, *Takbir & Sholawat*, produced in 2000, most song titles refer to the Islamic faith. The cover of this CD declares:

> The strength included in the spiritual values of Islam pushed us to add meaning and inspiration in the form of a musical contribution. The different kinds of music in this album have been taken from existing music styles, such as the Sundanese, the African, the Indian and other styles.[13]

This album contains two purely instrumental pieces: "Aqidah" and "Malongan." In "Aqidah" (faith), tuned drums introduce the theme that is later played by bowed lutes. According to Deni Hermawan's classification (2000, 74–75), in which vocals are needed for the Islamic content to be clear, these two songs would neither qualify as Islamic music (*musik Islam*) nor Islam-inspired music (*musik islami*). In fact, most of the music on this disc lacks a pronounced vocal part and text, problematizing the musics' position within contemporary West Javanese Islam. It is interesting to note that with the expansion of Islam-inspired music and its stress on vocal parts, there has been a simultaneous increase in purely instrumental music, in West Java at least, in which zithers and bowed lutes play an important role.

The Group Ath-Thawaf: "Ethnic Music with Islamic Flavor"

The leader of Ath-Thawaf is Yus Wiradiredja, who, since 2003, has also served as the head of the music department of the Bandung academy for dance, theatre, and music (STSI).[14] He started this group after he had been in the Netherlands for two months in 1999, and subsequently made a pilgrimage to Mecca. This religious experience inspired him to start Ath-Thawaf. The group consists of 15 to 20 members; almost all are students and staff members at STSI Bandung.

Yus Wiradiredja was born into a high-class and musical family in Cianjur in 1960 and learned to play the *kacapi* zither and to sing *Tembang Sunda Cianjuran* songs at an early age. When he was in secondary school in the 1970s, he played Latin music. By that time he had already mastered the *Cianjuran* music; in 1984, he won the prestigious DAMAS singing contest for *Tembang Sunda Cianjuran* music. For the last 10 years or so he has been a member of the jury for these DAMAS singing contests.

Wiradiredja's efforts to create new musical sounds, based on the Sundanese tradition, started in 1986 with the Patareman group of the Dasentra foundation,

lead by Ubun Kubarsah. This group consisted mainly of staff members and students of the conservatory and music schools around Bandung. Many new instruments were constructed and used, especially plucked and bowed instruments, and the existing Sundanese zither (*kacapi indung*) was also a featured instrument. Eventually, many well-known vocalists became involved in the Patareman group, including Neneng Dinar, Euis Komariah, Ida Widawati, Tati Saleh, and Hetty Koes Endang (Hermawan 2002, 30–31, 40–41).

Yus Wiradiredja started to write songs (music and lyrics) for Ath-Thawaf. With this group, Yus wanted to do something different from *Cianjuran* music. In 1981, when he was a young man, I recall him saying that *Cianjuran* music was "feudal music" only for the upper strata of society. In 2005, he jokingly said, "I want to create something different from *Cianjuran*, and become famous for creating this new type of music, like Etje Madjid Natawiredja became famous for his role in the prestigious *Cianjuran* music in the early 20th century!" Yus realized that he would not become rich with such a large group of musicians; from a purely economic perspective, a *Cianjuran* group with four to five musicians would have been better. Yus calls his music "ethnic and inspired by Islam" (*musik etnik Islami*), the term that his colleague Deni Hermawan (2000) used in his article.

In 2002, Ath-Thawaf produced two cassette tapes (*Gerbang Marhamah* and *Jihad Tahmid*), followed by a third tape in 2003 (*Pancering Hirup*). *Gerbang Marhamah* is an acronym for "Gerakan Pembangunan Masyarakat Berakhlakul Karimah," that is, Movement for the Development of a Society with a Noble Character, a moralistic revival movement (*Gerbang Marhamah* 2002, *Cianjur government* 2002).[15] The cassette, *Jihad Tahmid*, is named after two of its songs: "*Jihad Binafsi*" (holy war against desires) and "*Tahmid*" (laud). This cassette tape starts with a spoken introduction stressing the importance of trying out the possibilities presented in life and fighting for the truth. The name of the third cassette tape, *Pancering Hirup*, means the essence of life.

Ath-Thawaf means the fulfillment of religious duties by walking seven times around the Ka'aba building in Mecca. Yus interpreted this name of the group as the search for truth. On the cover of the cassette tape, *Jihad Tahmid* (2002), he writes (my translation):

> Art is a token of the grace of Allah that is given to humans to become a medium to be pious to Him. Therefore, we real believers in Allah try to reflect Islamic values by means of music. [...] We present a concept of music that is based on Sundanese culture, which is combined with aspects of music from all over the world, with the hope that this will produce a special style, feeling and color. In the treasury of *nasyid* music [Islamic singing], the "brotherhood" with ethnic music is still rare today.

> Because the treasure of our ethnic music is very rich with expressions and highly valued musical emotions, it may become a source of creativity that includes the Islamic spirit, and we hope that in this way the values of Islam will penetrate more deeply in the heart of each Muslim.

The cassette tape, *Pancering Hirup* (2003), is introduced by Haji Agum Gumelar, a retired general, in a similar way:

> In its essence, music is a token of the grace of the Lord for us, to become a medium for contemplation and enrichment of the treasure of our inner feelings, so that we constantly remember and always express our thanks to Him. Music has abstract qualities that we can experience as something beautiful in life. This reminds us that the Lord has qualities of beauty.[16]

In March 2005, Yus voluntarily fasted one day per week. I wondered about his feelings for the Islamic faith in relation to music, and I asked him why he had chosen only religious texts for his compositions. He answered that he was an artist in the first place, and that the texts are a kind of "missionary work" (*dakwah*). He did not intend to stay with just religious topics; he was now also crafting a song about the deterioration of the environment (*lingkungan hidup*) in Bandung. Environmentalism is another important topic in the *Gerbang Marhamah* program of the Cianjur regency.[17] Not everyone was happy with Yus's musical choices. Some *Cianjuran* musicians said that it was a pity that he did not stick to the *Cianjuran* music that he had mastered so well, and that he invested so much of his energy in the *musik Islami* of Ath-Thawaf.

Ath-Thawaf's cassette tape, *Gerbang Marhamah* (2002), includes a written introduction by the regent (*bupati*) of Cianjur, H. Wasidi Swastomo. The Cianjur regency hosted a concert of Ath-Thawaf when the Gerbang Marhamah program was launched, and supported the production of this tape. The text of the first song, "Gerbang Marhama," in Sundanese, is as follows:

[Gerakan Pembangungan Masyarakat	[The movement for the establishment of a people
Berakhlaqul Karimah]	[society] with a noble /moral character]
Gerbang Marhamah (4x)	Gerbang Marhamah
Cianjur sugih mukti tur Islami (2x)	Cianjur lives in comfort and the Islamic way
Gerbang Marhamah (2x)	Gerbang Marhamah

Tarékah hirup hurip dunya ahérat	A means for vital power in eternity
Gerbang Marhamah udagan urang	Gerbang Marhamah is our purpose
Jatining umat Islam ahlaqul karimah	The essence for an Islamic community with a noble/ moral character
Gerbang Marhamah (2x)	Gerbang Marhamah
Buleudkeun tékad suci amparan iklas	Take a firm decision to be pure, show honesty
Gerbang Marhamah urang tanjeurkeun	Gerbang Marhamah we establish
Sakumna Islam pikeun ngudag mardhotillah	The entire Islamic religion for pursuing matters that are approved by Allah
[Refrain]	
Cianjur sugih mukti tur Islami	Cianjur lives in comfort and the Islamic way
Pancegkeun ku urang kudu ngabukti	We have to make it fit, we need to prove it
Cianjur sugih mukti nu hakiki	Cianjur lives in real comfort
Gerbang Marhamah rupi tarékahna	Gerbang Marhamah is the means for this

Musical Features of Ath-Thawaf's Music

The music is a fusion of several musical traditions, but certain features make Ath-Thawaf's music specifically Sundanese. First, there are Sundanese musical instruments involved, such as drum (*kendang*), xylophone (*gambang*), bamboo flute (*suling*) and zither (*kacapî*); there are also newly made instruments based on older Sundanese models, for example, the "*puklung*" percussion instrument. The song "Reformatika Diri" (*Jihad Tahmid* 2002), for instance, features both the *gambang* and *puklung* performing Sundanese patterns (van Zanten 2003, 7–8). All songs use the Sundanese *madenda* or *sorog* tone system,[18] and the instrumental solos of the *suling* in the song "Al Hadits" (*Gerbang Marhamah* 2002) could also be heard in *Cianjuran* songs. However, many rhythms and the choral multipart singing, found in such songs as "Reformatika Diri," do not sound Sundanese at all. In addition, refrains, sung by a chorus, appear in most of the songs, a feature that is absent in most Sundanese music.

The cassette tape, *Pancering Hirup*, contains two song cycles. The first is based on the "*Rukun Iman*" (principles of belief) and consists of six songs about belief in 1) Allah, 2) the angels, 3) the book of Allah, 4) the messenger (Muhammad), 5) the

resurrection, and 6) the decrees and will of Allah. The second song cycle addresses the "*Rukun Islam*" (five principles of Islam): the confession of faith (*Syahadat*), daily prayers (*Sholat*), compulsory gifts to the poor (*Zakat*), fasting (*Puasa*), and the pilgrimage (*Munggah Haji*). Yus Wiradiredja composed all of the songs.

I will take "Syahadat" (confession of faith) as an example of Yus's musical ideas. The song starts with an instrumental introduction on mainly plucked and bowed stringed instruments. The chorus then sings the lines of the confession of faith in Arabic without accompaniment, now and then in multipart singing. This section is followed in sequence by an instrumental section, solo singing with accompaniment (verse 1), and another instrumental interlude. Then, the chorus sings verse 2 with accompaniment, followed by the confession sung solo in Sundanese; this part is accompanied by a Sundanese *kacapi* zither, played like the small Cianjuran zither (*kacapi rincik*), and other instruments. There is again an instrumental part, followed by a repetition of verse 1 (chorus) and the confession of faith in Sundanese (solo). The unaccompanied confession of faith, sung in Arabic by the chorus, ends the song. Below are select chorus and solo parts; all are in Sundanese except for the initial chorus part (the *Syahadat* itself), which is in Arabic and reproduced here as it appears in transliteration in the notes.

[Chorus:]	
Asyhadu allaailaaha illallooh	I confess there is no other god than Allah
Wa'asyhadu anna Muhammadar	I believe in Muhammad
Rosuululooh (2x)	His prophet
[Solo:]	
1. *Syahadat rukun Islam nu kahiji*	The confession of faith is the first Islamic principle
Syahadat jatining hirup urang	The confession is the essence of human life
Maca syahadat dibarung niat	Recite (read) the confession with intentions
Maca syahadat dibarung ku ibadah	Recite the confession in a devout way.
[Chorus:]	
2. *Syahadat cahaya nur Illahi*	The confession is the light of Allah
Syahadat pancering hirup urang	The confession is the essence of our life
Dua kalimah wening tur suci	The two sentences, pure and holy,

Geura kacangking wujudkeun na amalan	Are the start of realizing good deeds
[Solo:]	
Abdi nyaksi taya Gusti anging Alloh	I confess there is no other God than Allah
Satemenna Nabi Muhammad utusan Alloh (2x)	Really, the prophet Muhammad Is the messenger of Allah

In the evening of March 10, 2005, Ath-Thawaf gave a concert near the beach in Pelabuhan Ratu. Before the group performed, there was a performance by a local *qasidah* group (consisting of women singing while playing frame drums) and speeches by dignitaries such as the governor of the province of West Java. The whole event was organized because the number of hotel guests had dropped drastically after the tsunami of December 26, 2004, that had claimed many victims in Aceh. One of the speeches by a scientist from Bogor University asserted that a tsunami in Pelabuhan Ratu could never raise the seawater by more than one meter.[19]

When Yus saw the audience, he commented that they apparently were from Nadhlatul Ulama, a group affiliated with former president Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid), who were loyal to their leaders but conservative in their views, including

Figure 8.3. String instruments used by Ath-Thawaf: *kacapi* zithers, bowed lute (*gesek besar*), and violin. At the front right is Yus Wiradiredja. Rehearsal at STSI Bandung, March 2, 2005. (photo by author.)

those about music. Not a good audience, he thought. For the performance, there were an insufficient number of microphones for the different sections of the ensemble, and the bowed string instruments (violins and other bowed lutes), especially, did not come through clearly. Yus was disappointed and angry, because he had asked for the needed 25 microphones well in advance. Ath-Thawaf began at 9 pm and played for about one hour. They started with a style of music that is usually recognized as Islamic involving frame drums and singing before proceeding through the rest of their program. The audience listened to the performance, but—as Yus had expected—did not show much enthusiasm.

The covers of *Jihad Tahmid* and *Gerbang Marhamah* leave no doubt about the intention to represent Islamic religious ideas via the music: the men, dressed entirely in white clothes and headbands, are shown carrying the *rebana* frame drums, while the women wear entirely white clothes with *jilbab* scarf. The *Gerbang Marhamah* cover also makes the intent clear, as it features the picture of a grand mosque. Through visuals and music (despite the occasional instrumental parts), Ath-Thawaf unmistakably meets the criteria for *musik Islami* in West Java as established by Hermawan. In Figure 8.4, a photo taken at the concert in Pelabuhan Ratu, the clothes are definitely Islamic, though the women's dress consists of dark trousers and a green-blue long shirt and headscarf (*jilbab*).

Figure 8.4. Some of the vocalists of Ath-Thawaf on stage in Pelabuhan Ratu, March 10, 2005. (photo by author).

Conclusion

From the discourse within the country, it is clear that most Indonesians do not want Islam in Indonesia to be equated with Islam in Middle Eastern countries. They prefer "indigenous Islam" (*Islam pribumi*) in Indonesia, and oppose a strong Arabic orientation. This stand is clearly true in West Java and is evident in some of the Islamic music discussed above.

Abdul Hadi (2001) believes that the discussion on the arts should not be steered by ethics (*fikih*), but rather by mystical considerations (*tasawuf*) or aesthetics, and the arts should not be judged in terms of "forbidden" (*haram*) and "permitted" (*halal*). If ethics are used to levy judgement on music, there should be a choice between "indifferent/no use" (*mubah*) and "objectionable" (*makruh*). Abdul Hadi prefers, however, to use terms of taste: "beautiful" (*indah*) and "ugly" (*buruk*). For him it is the social setting, or empirical reality, that should lead discussions on music and Islam (Abdul Mun'im 2003, 8). Music should sensitize us to spiritual values and lead us away from the material world. In this regard, artists have a particular responsibility. With his/her visionary power (*kekuatan kenabian*), the artist should be able to uplift people and show them a wider perspective (Enoh 2003, 8).

In West Java, we have observed an increase of Islam-inspired music with Sundanese features (*musik etnik islami*). This trend necessarily includes stressing the role of vocal parts, which are used to spread Islamic ideas or even to function as *dakwah*. In fact, however, the dominance of vocal music is not new at all, as Sundanese music is seldom purely instrumental (van Zanten 1989, 13). Ath-Thawaf provides perhaps the best example of a composer and music group negotiating new Islamic musical possibilities while retaining their Sundanese and Indonesian identities and integrating together Arabic language, Sundanese, texts, and dress based in and on Islamic principles, indigenous instruments, and mostly vocal sections with some instrumental parts. Seemingly in contrast with this trend, we also see new forms of purely instrumental music emerging, both in the fusion music of the Sambasanda group and in *Tembang Sunda Cianjuran* music.

Islam is not as simple an equation as some politicians would like us to believe; neither are the attempts to cope with or encapsulate human life via music in present-day West Java. Discussions about Islam can certainly not be confined to the contents of a holy book and sacred written traditions. We need also to look at the actual practices of the people involved.

Notes

1. For issues of "ethnic groups and boundaries," see the classic work by Barth (1969).

2. See also Photo 3 in van Zanten 1989, 14.

3. See Barendregt (2006, 180 and 186, n.15) for a summary of similar remarks in Malaysia.

4. Rasmussen (2001, 49–50) writes: "I was able to witness the marriage of religion and government ..." and "Islam is not only a spiritual endeavor but also a civic obligation." However, from her description of the festivities around the graduation ceremonies of an Islamic school (*pesantren*) in South Sumatra, it seems that it is rather the Indonesian army (ABRI) that was involved, and this may better be explained as controlling political stability. Of course, events organized by the government all start with Islamic prayers. However such a phenomenon develops, this marriage between religion and politics, was also present in Europe until recent decades. From a modern European perspective, it is amazing to see the extent to which the Americans continue to mix religion and government; to a lesser extent, the British people, whose queen is still the head of the Anglican Church, maintain a similar partnership.

5. Some relevant articles and commentaries can be found on the websites of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, http://www.mui.or.id/), the Jaringan Islam Indonesian (JIL, http://islamlib.com/id/), and of the former and late Indonesian president, K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid (http://gusdur.net/); see also my Internet article (2007). All sites listed last visited September 26, 2009.

6. See the website of the Iqbal Academy Pakistan: http://www.allamaiqbal.com/ (last accessed September 26, 2009). It should be noted that Iqbal had quite different ideas about the relation between religion and the state than most Indonesians; in an address to Cambridge students in 1931 (see the website, section Bibliography), he said: "The biggest blunder made by Europe was the separation of Church and State."

7. "Kebahagian spiritual dan material di dunia dan akhirat, rahmat segenap alam, di bawah naungan keridhaan Allah."

8. "Lebih baik diam daripada menyanyi dalam nada-nada yang menyedihkan, gelap, pilu dan mengandung kematian" (Enoh 2003, 8). This statement contrasts with the atmosphere in *Tembang Sunda Cianjuran* songs that is characterized by nostalgic feelings (*waas*) and broken love; performing and listening to these songs may be seen as a catharsis (van Zanten 1989, 70–74).

9. "Ia harus menjadi mata hati dan nuraninya masyarakat" (Enoh 2003, 9).

10. Capwell (1995, 85) mentions that in Indonesia the term "Arabia" is often used as a generalization for Yemen, because the Yemeni are overwhelmingly represented among the Indonesians of Arabic descent. *Gambus* and other Middle Eastern musics are known by the term *irama padang pasir* (rhythm of the desert). The present-day orientation is more akin to Egypt, where Indonesians go to study Islam. Rasmussen (2005, 77) recounts a teaching situation of Quranic recitation in Jakarta, where the teacher shouted to a student: "Don't sound Malaysian [Malay], sound like Egypt." See also Rasmussen 2001, 53.

11. There are audio examples of these types of singing on the cassette tape with van Zanten, 1989.

12. More information on Islamic pop music in Indonesia and Malaysia, in particular *nasyid*, may be found in articles by Barendregt and van Zanten (2002), Sarkissian (2005), and Barendregt (2006), among others.

13. "Kekuatan yang terkandung dalam nilai spiritual Islam telah mendorong kami untuk mewujudkan makna dan semangatnya dalam bentuk sajian musik. Penataan bentuk musik yang ditampilkan dalam album ini diambil dari berbagai gaya musik yang ada, seperti gaya musik Sunda, Africa, India, dan lain-lain."

14. For more information about Yus Wiradiredja, see http://dosen.stsi-bdg.ac.id/karawitan/yusuf-wiradiredja/index.html.

15. This is, in fact, a government program of the Cianjur region (see *Cianjur government* 2002). The website mentions that the Gerbang Marhamah program was announced officially on the 1st Muharam 1442 Hijriyah, or March 26, 2001. It is an initiative by the local government and people of Cianjur, especially Muslims, to increase the level of moral behavior and also to face globalization and some of its negative impacts. The point is to strive for (1) people with good morality, as a foundation for prosperous families, (2) prosperous families as a foundation for prosperous communities, and (3) prosperous communities where people love and respect each other.

16. "Hakekat musik adalah satu perwujudan karunia Tuhan kepada kita untuk dijadikan media kontemplasi serta memperkaya khasanah kekayaan batin, sehingga kita senantiasa ingat dan selalu bersykur kepada Nya. Musik mempunyai sifat abstrak namun dapat kita rasakan sebagai suatu keindahan dalam kehidupan. Hal ini mengingatkan kita bahwa Tuhan mempunyai sifat keindahan."

17. The three major principles of the Gerbang Marhamah program of the Cianjur government are to develop the right mentality/morality of humans (*akhlak manusia*) with respect to (1) Allah (*terhadap Allah*), (2) fellow human beings (*terhadap sesama manusia*) and (3) nature and environment (*terhadap alam dan lingkungannya*) (*Cianjur government* 2002).

18. It is interesting to note that Nano S., a well-known composer of popular music and pupil of the late Koko Koswara, remarked in March 2005 to me that his teacher preferred—in contrast to Yus Wiradiredja—the *saléndro* tone system for his songs with Islamic themes. For an example, listen to the cassette tape *Shalawat Nabi al-Imam; Kawih pupujian Sunda* (1995). Note that Yus Wiradiredja mostly adjusts this Sundanese *sorog* tone system to fit the Western tuning of the keyboard used.

19. Unfortunately, these words were defied by the tsunami that hit the south coast of Java in the region near Pangandaran, about 200 km eastwards, on July 17, 2006, with waves between 5 and 10 meters (*Kompas Cybermedia* 17 July 2006) that claimed about 800 victims.

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Part IV

Contemporary Performative Worlds

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9

"Art with a Muslim Theme" and "Art with a Muslim Flavor" among Women of West Aceh

Margaret Kartomi

In this chapter, Margaret Kartomi an expert on the music and culture of Sumatra, explores the sitting dance known as ratéb meuseukat. *Situated in Aceh, the province known for centuries as "the Veranda of Mecca" due to its strong commitment to Islam and gateway location in the Indian Ocean, the dance has a complicated history due to the fact that it is performed by women. Developed for the purpose of* dakwah *(bringing people to Islam),* ratéb meuseukat *is performed by troupes of female singer-dancers in west Aceh at agricultural, life-cycle, and religious celebrations, and to welcome guests on formal government and corporate occasions. Some religious leaders (*ulama*) have engaged in debate about the morality of* meuseukat *as a female performing art. Most are of the opinion that women do not belong on stage, and, if they do appear at all, should do so in the presence of women only, without men in attendance. Kartomi asserts that the position of* meuseukat *is, however, unique due to its historic association with Islam, the lack of accompanying instruments, and performances of either religious or secular texts. When religious texts are performed, the performance is considered as a form of sitting liturgy or "art with an Islamic theme"; when secular texts are performed, it is considered a form of entertainment but also an "art with Islamic flavor," because Muslim formulae, such as the confession of faith, are sung at the beginning and end of every performance. Thus, due to the religious content of both the liturgical and entertainment variants of* ratéb meuseukat, ulama *have been more ambivalent and less judgmental about its performance. Based on comprehensive fieldwork and analysis, Kartomi provides a deep description of* meuseukat, *analyzing the solo and group singing that is performed with synchronous body movement and body percussion. She also analyses the kinds of modern changes in* meuseukat *where faster, shorter, and more spectacular styles, with greater entertainment value, have been developed by sponsors and artists. Finally, two female*

artists and choreographers, Ibu T. Aji Rakibah and Ibu Cut Asia, separated by nearly 100 years, are profiled for their artistic innovation and agency, and the genre's position is mapped onto the contemporary history of Aceh from the troubled independence movement to the tsunami of 2004. The rich and complex historical, contextual, and artistic components that are explicated by Kartomi, of just one regional Indonesian Islamic genre, strongly suggest that this depth of analysis is a model for the investigation of Indonesian Islamic arts throughout the archipelago.

Introduction

Ratéb meuseukat, or simply *meuseukat,* is a female song-and-dance genre with a long history in the west districts of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (see Figure 9.1).[1] *Meuseukat* is performed by a row of women in a sitting position—actually while kneeling or rising up on their heels—as opposed to other dances, which are performed in standing positions. Its participants can either sing texts from the Muslim liturgy (*diké* or *likê*)—in which case their performance is regarded as a form of sitting liturgy—or they can sing secular texts.

Over the past century there has been controversy surrounding appropriate religious art forms vis-à-vis secular art forms in Aceh, especially those engaging women. Religious leaders (*ulama*), many of whom own and teach at Muslim boarding schools and mosques, have seen it as their prerogative to take a stand against secular officials, that is, the *ulèëbalang* (aristocratic chieftains) in colonial times (1873–1945), and against the national and regional government leaders (since 1945) up to the present. The *ulèëbalang* favored the singing and dancing of young girls on stage to welcome their guests at official functions and campaigns, a practice continued by government leaders to this day. Most *ulama*, however, have held that for religious and moral reasons, women should not appear on stage at all; if they do, they should perform only for female audiences. This idea is based on the belief that women should not tempt the opposite sex. To distinguish between religious and secular, performances with religious texts are classed as "art with an Islamic theme" (*kesenian islami*), while those with secular texts are referred to simply as "art" (*kesenian*). *Meuseukat*, however, is exceptional. Even performances with texts about love, politics, and other secular themes are classed as "art [that breathes] with an Islamic flavor" (*kesenian yang bernafaskan Islam*). Two reasons for this exception are that Muslim formulae, such as the confession of faith, are often sung at the beginnings and ends of performances, and that *meuseukat* is believed to have been developed by religious teachers centuries ago when the people

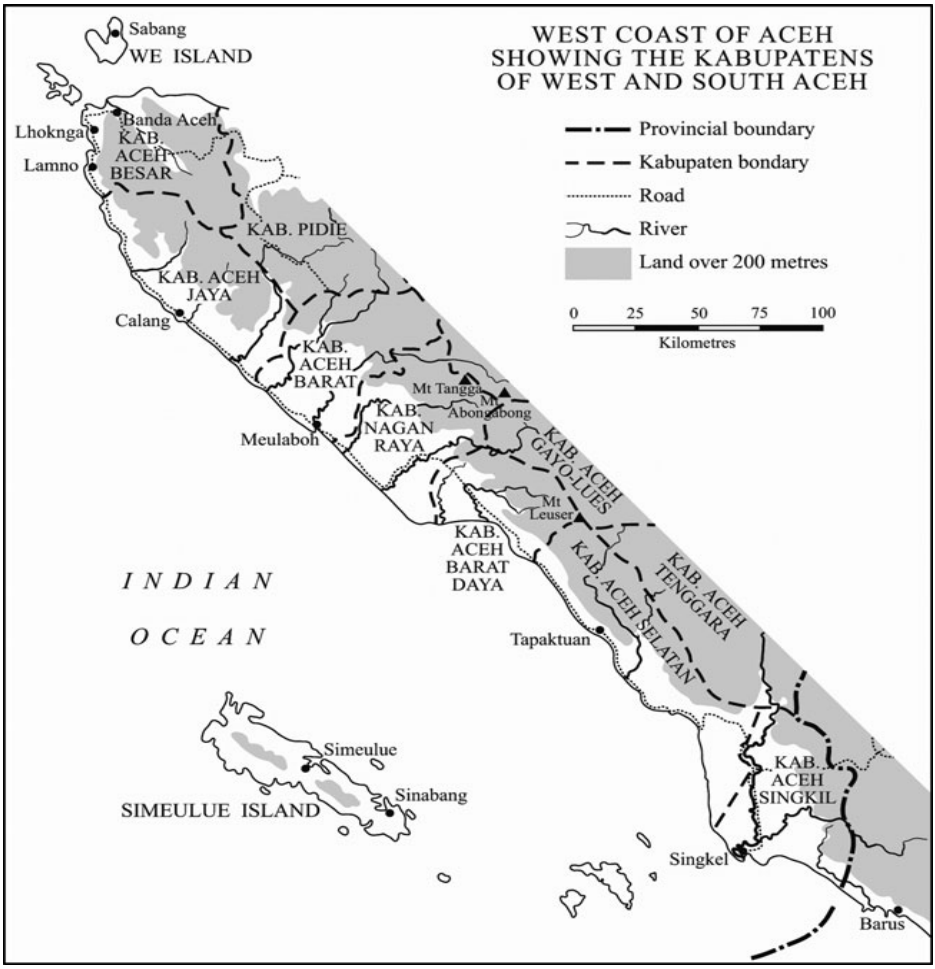


Figure 9.1. Map of the west coast of the province of Aceh, showing the provinces (kabupaten-s) of West and South Aceh. (map by author)

were first converted from paganism to Islam. Thus, many *ulama* support women performing *meuseukat* with religious texts for female audiences in the home village, and only lightly oppose or are ambivalent about performances with secular texts.

Whether religious or secular, the row of *meuseukat* performers are led by a solo singer of poetry, who alternates with her assistant, and collaborates with the dance leader by exchanging vocal clues that indicate commands to change from

one song, tempo, or dynamic level to another. The row of artists kneels close together, with shoulders touching for support, as they perform a variety of movements with the upper body, torso, head, and arms, moving like a wave from left to right and vice versa, or bouncing up and down, or moving diagonally to the right and left. They accompany some of their singing with their own body percussion music, and they also perform episodes of body percussion between episodes of singing with a high degree of compactness and precision. The body percussion, the most distinctive aspect of their performance, is produced by clapping their hands, snapping their fingers, and beating their shoulders and thighs or the floor in front of them, thus creating intricate rhythmic-timbral textures that may vary in tempo and dynamic intensity, build up to impressive peaks of virtuosity and excitement, and feature sudden cadences that typically bring performances to a brilliant end.

Islam in West Aceh

Even though many aspects of ancestor and nature veneration persist in their musical arts, the people of west Aceh celebrate their calendrical, life cycle, and Muslim holy days with a variety of Muslim-oriented and secular art forms. Like other Acehnese, the people in the western *kabupaten* are proud that the first Muslim kingdom in Southeast Asia was established in present-day Aceh. There is evidence that the west coast received merchant ships, religious leaders, and teachers from the Middle East, India, and Persia over the centuries (Nicholson 1965, 19, 29), and the names of some genres seem to confirm certain of these foreign connections. For example, the *meuseukat* genre may derive from the name of the town of Muscat (which is located on the historical sea trade route to Aceh) in Oman, and *ratéb meulabari* (which was still extant in the 1930s but is now possibly obsolete) from India's Malabar coast, also on the trade route (Djajadiningrat 1934).

The local population produced its own religious leaders, including 'Abd ar-Rauf, born in Singkil on Aceh's southwest coast in the latter half of the 17th century.[2] Venerated under the name of Teungku di Kuala, he holds first place among Aceh's holy men as the saint who first introduced Islam, in a moderate Sufi form, after returning from prolonged study in the Holy Land, and introducing the Shattariyah order in Aceh. Leaders of this and some other Sufi orders spread the faith by means of various forms of communal religious litany called *diké* or *liké* (Ar. *dhikr,* "remembrance"), that is, group spiritual exercises with body movement and invocations of the most beautiful names of Allah and the prophets, some with frame-drum (*rapa'i*) accompaniment,

and with other exercises featuring body percussion in lieu of frame drumming, the only form of instrumental music-making said to be approved by the Prophet. Men and women practiced the *diké* separately in their homes, though men also practiced in the *surau* (male meeting and praying houses in the villages). *Meuseukat* was the main female genre, featuring vocal music with religious texts and body percussion only. The cumulative effect of the repetition of the names of Allah and the prophets (e.g., *Bismillah,* "in the name of Allah") in the performances has been heightened awareness of the divine presence. Like other Sufi genres, such as *daboh* (Ar. *dabbus*),[3] *meuseukat* aimed to obtain divine vision through mysticism (*tassawuf*).[4] Sufi thought still exists among the people of west Aceh, as expressed in their pilgrimages to the graves of saints such as 'Abd ar-Rauf, their frequent *diké* sessions, and their sitting genres of song and dance.

From the 1920s, a strict strain of Islamic belief and practices—Wahhabism—entered Aceh from Saudi Arabia. Many *ulama* fiercely opposed all forms of the pre-Muslim arts, especially those with shamanic, animist associations, and including the music and dance traditionally performed at the home of a deceased person; the latter led to prolonged crying and other expressions of grief, including the tragic female dances *phô* and *malelang* (Kartomi, forthcoming). From this time on, some *ulama* have tried to control female performances, succeeding at times and failing at other times, but many still expect that women, if they practice the arts at all, perform separately from the men.

The Gender Divide: The Social Role of Women

Distinct rules govern social behavior, property ownership and the division of work in Aceh's gender-segregated, male-dominant society. Both sexes till the fields, but men traditionally seek their fortune away from the family (this trip is called *merantau*), leaving women in charge at home as farmworkers and organizers of family life-cycle ceremonies; according to Islamic law, men must celebrate these ceremonies in a different area of the home than the women. Aceh is a matrilocal society in which women traditionally inherit the family house. They are responsible for carrying out ceremonies to mark births and deaths, and they manage healing, domestic and agricultural chores and the raising of children. Not surprisingly, the women have developed their own rich repertory, which include love songs, lullabies, songs for children, laments, shamanic healing songs, and rice-stamping music at harvest time, when the women turn their back-breaking task of stamping the husks off the grain into

a musical game with dance. The women also perform devotional Muslim songs with body percussion and movement. For a summary of their genres, see Figure 9.2.

As the playing of musical instruments is regarded mainly as a male pursuit, women play only xylophones and flutes in the rice-fields or at home. They also sing and dance, with some of the talented women performing long stories in *hikayat* form (telling/singing Muslim and non-Muslim stories and legends). The girls undertake studies in gender-segregated religious schools (*sanggar*) in Islam, Qur'an reading, and the performance of the litany. Boys learn to play their forms of performing arts in the *surau*.

Women have not normally taken part in formal religious debates between moderate and orthodox *ulama*, for example, deliberating over the behavior of artists described as *kesufi-sufian* ("pretending to be Sufi"), or whether performances of certain male or female genres that apparently have historical Hindu-Acehnese origins should be allowed. Yet, their opinions are apparent in their frequently expressed desire and determination to be active performers in all the arts. West-coast religious leaders from the late 1960s to the 1970s opposed the performance of female genres associated with pre-Muslim beliefs such as *phô* and *malelang*, the main female standing (*dong*) genre that features laments, dance, and body percussion, because of its clear associations with non-Islamic beliefs. Most *ulama* today approve of *meuseukat* because of its supposed religious origin and the fact that it usually includes at least some religious texts, but they are less approving of *phô* and *malelang*; thus, these genres nearly died out in the 1960s–1970s, saved only by the groups of women who transformed their content and style and revived them with help from the provincial leader (*bupati*) and other government figures. Government officials still promote *phô* and *malelang* genres in the regions (*kabupaten*) of

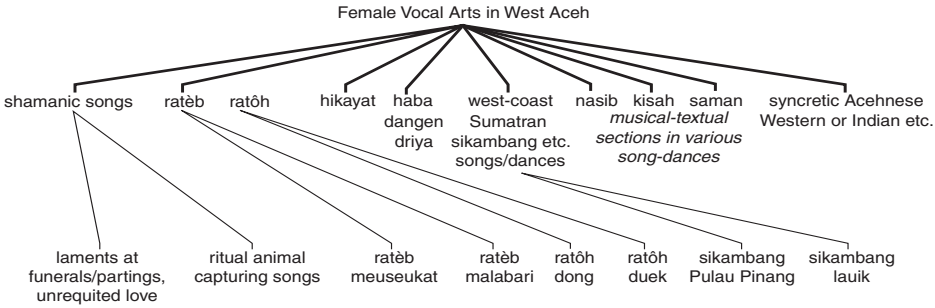


Figure 9.2. Female vocal arts of West Aceh.

Aceh Barat, Aceh Barat Daya, and Aceh Selatan, and in the Aceh diaspora in Sumatra and beyond.

In everyday life and artistic performances, the tenets of modesty in dress are more strictly applied to females than to males. Women artists today normally wear the traditional west Acehnese costume, comprising a long-sleeved, high-necked blouse, *slendang* (stole) over their *kain* (waist to knee wraparound), trousers, and antique jewelry, with the *jilbab* (shoulder-length head-covering). This costume generally replaces the traditional high hair knot and flowers worn as recently as the early 1990s, as the awareness of Muslim identity increased. Men wear the traditional long-sleeved shirts/coats, *kain* and trousers, with a headband or the Muslim *peci* head covering for the sitting dances. Both sexes perform bare-footed.

Although most west Acehnese women have not yet been exposed to the discourses of international feminism, many shine in their own right in their performances of and leadership in the female arts. It is they who decide on the choreography and musical qualities of a performance and the order of artistic proceedings at a family celebration, and some have even been responsible for making lasting improvements in the quality of teaching and performance, including the selection of pious texts for the singing in the sitting dances. Indeed, one woman of outstanding artistic and leadership talent has managed to devise some remarkably influential strategies to develop the west Acehnese performing arts throughout the area. This woman is Ibu Cut Asiah, whom I met and interviewed in her hometown of Meulaboh in 1982 and again in 2007, and who allowed me to record her choreographed performances of the west Acehnese *phô* and *meuseukat* song-dances and the transplanted *seudati inong* dance (which differs in its musical and dance style as well as costuming from the usual north-coast versions). Her devotion to the arts and her successful promotion of them have inspired the next generation of women, especially her former students, to assume leadership roles in arts activities in rural as well as urban areas of west Aceh. Though her troupe and others were always formally administered and publicized by a male leader (in her case, by her husband, who died in the 2004 tsunami), the women have served as the actual artistic leaders, teachers, and administrators in every respect and have researched and adapted traditional art forms with far-reaching effect on many troupes at regional and provincial levels. They have received some recognition, which has given them the courage to try for more. Such is the case with Ibu Cut Asiah's research into and adaptation of the traditional female dance, *meuseukat*. As will be discussed below, she believes it originally developed from women performing the liturgy while sitting in a row, as in traditional practice.

Female Muslim Sitting Liturgies: Source of the Sitting Song-Dance *Meuseukat*?

Acehnese girls learn how to perform the Muslim litany (*wird*) in segregated religious schools (*dayah* and *madrasah*). They also learn to recite the Qur'an (*beuet Qur'an*) both solo and in a group (*daroih*). Sitting in a row, they perform the litany without prescribed body movement, but sway their bodies rhythmically without body percussion when reciting the *sifeut* (characteristics of Allah), *angguk rabani* (praises of the Prophet), *rukon* (principles of Islam), and *dala'il* (main religious teachings). These liturgical practices, shown in Figure 9.3, are not called dances because they are not artistic displays; their purpose is simply to express their participants' religious piety or fervor.[5]

The main difference between the liturgy and prayers is the local form of the *meuseukat* dance, with the addition of body percussion technique to the movement. Usually between 10 and 18 teenage girls "sit" ("*duek*"), though they actually kneel on their heels closely together in a row, maintaining physical contact with their neighbors' arms on the right and left for bodily support. They are led by a *syéh* (dance and chorus leader) and a pair of female solo singers (*aneuk syahê*) who, depending on the occasion, sing ornamented, free-rhythmic melodies to fixed or improvised texts that tell of the birth and life of the Prophet, offer advice about customs and polite behavior, refer to diverse secular, animist, historical or legendary topics, or comment on various emotional, social, and political matters that affect daily life. These religious or secular texts, which are sung in communal exercises with set repetitions, are called *liké* or *diké* (from the Arabic word *dhikr* ["remembrance"]), or *ratéb* (probably derived from the Arabic *rātib*).[6] *Meuseukat* performances with secular texts—and always with a few Muslim phrases added—may also be called *ratôh duek,*

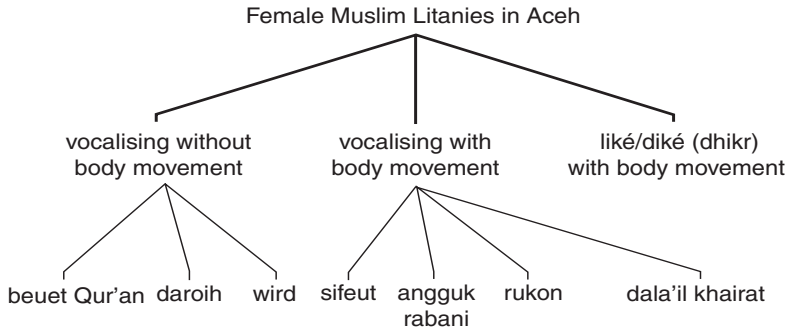


Figure 9.3. Female Muslim liturgies in Aceh.

literally meaning "sitting chattering" and therefore comprise texts about daily life ranging from moral precepts to risqué jokes. The choruses sung by members of the dance group (*rakan*) as they dance alternate with the more elaborate melodies produced by the solo singer(s). The row of singer-dancers combine rhythmic upper-body dance movements with rhythmic sound textures produced by snapping their fingers, clapping, tapping their shoulders or upper breasts, beating their thighs, or combinations of these textures that constitute *peh badan* (body percussion). The singer-dancers move compactly in choreographed upper-body formations, sometimes rising on their knees to perform elaborate movements, including lifting their arms above their heads.

Given that girls (or boys in their separate context) perform both the litanies and the song-dances while kneeling closely together in a row, Ibu Cut Asiah is one of many Acehnese who say that *meuseukat* or *ratéb duek* ("sitting religious chant") may originally have derived from forms of worship or litanies practiced in the Middle East, Persia, or Iraq that were transplanted to Aceh by Indian, Persian, or Middle Eastern merchants, returning pilgrims, and others. They may be right, though any proof has been lost in the passage of time.

Further complicating the issue of origins are the sometimes-confusing categories of *ratéb duek* ("sitting religious chant") and *ratôh duek* (lit. "sitting chattering"). As Amir has argued (2006, 126), the Dutch colonial-era scholar Snouck Hurgronje was wrong when he wrote that all Acehnese art forms called *ratéb* were local derivations of religious devotions called *rātib* (in Arabic) and included the secular sitting and standing dances with the religious ones in the category of *ratéb* (Snouck Hurgronje 1893/1906 II, 216–223). In fact, the *ratôh duek* song texts are rarely religious, though a few Islamic phrases are usually added, especially in the opening *saleum* (greeting) section. Artists may have begun to add these religious phrases to protect their art forms and appease those 20th-century religious leaders who opposed the arts on the grounds that they are for worldly pleasure, not religious edification. Many of the dances, including some that Snouck Hurgronje described, actually fall in present day parlance into the category of *ratôh*. A further confusion arises because some of the *ratôh duek* song texts, especially in west Aceh, often contain *ratap* (lit. "wailing") song texts which express, for example, a parent's feelings of grief when a baby dies, or a wife's sorrow as her husband departs on a distant journey, perhaps never to return (Abdullah, Aznawi, in Amir 2006, Compact Disc 2). A clear distinction, then, needs to be made between sung Muslim liturgies as practiced in Muslim schools and among Islamic brotherhoods on the one hand (*ratéb duek* with religious texts), and the sitting song-dances (*ratôh duek* with secular texts or laments [*ratap*]) on the other; for only the liturgies are a form of religious worship.

Ratéb Meuseukat: Etymology and Origin Theories

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the history and style of the *meuseukat* song-dance, its recent appropriation by government officials, and its adoption outside Aceh in other Indonesian cities and among overseas diasporas.

Traditionally, females of any age performed *ratéb meuseukat* in a separate room in a village home, but to a female audience only, on the occasion of weddings, farewells to Hajj pilgrims, and celebrations of holy days, such as the end of Eid al-Fitr, the fasting month, and on Eid al-Adha, the remembrance of the day of Ibrahim's sacrifice. Many *ratéb meuseukat* texts deal with the sea, thus are song texts describing a voyage, for example, from Meulaboh to Penang island off the west coast of the Malay peninsula (see Kartomi with Amir 2005), while another recounts a part of dominant west-coast mermaid legend, *Sikambang* (see Kartomi 1987). As mentioned above, *meuseukat* with religious texts may have developed spontaneously in an *ulama's* home in west Aceh from the practice of singing songs of praise with body movement after Isya prayers (the evening prayers held at c. 7.30 P.M.), while those with secular texts may have developed from the desire to entertain (pers. comm., Ibu Cut Asiah 2007).

A religious example of *ratèb meuseukat*, titled "Sallalla hu 'ala Nabi ya" ("Salute the Prophet"),[7] contains the following verses: "Sallallahu 'ala Nabi ya"/"Peace be upon the Prophet"; "Nabi Sallallahu 'alaihi Rasul Sallal"/"The Prophet, peace be upon the Apostle, peace"; and "La hu 'ala Nabi bi Nabi Muhammad Abda di Rasul"/"He the Prophet, Prophet Muhammad, the Apostle." In a later section featuring the "Burak Meunari" song (Daud et al 1994–95, 25), the text and its translation read: "Lon Bu lon Burak meunari, Burak meunari"/"I [am offering a song about] a dancing flying horse";"Lon a lon ateuh rueung gunòng, ateuh rueng gunòng"/"On top of the back of the mountains, on top of the back of the mountains"; "Lon bak lon bak cabeung bungong, bak cabeung bungong"/"I [am offering a song about) a flower sprig, a flower sprig";"Lon a lon aneuk leue ku a aneuk leue' kua"/"I [am offering a song about) a baby nightingale, a baby nightingale."This is an intensely religious *meuseukat* text that refers to the "flower" of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, and the Prophet's "voice" as birds, especially nightingales. All of the verses are about Muhammad and Burak, the mount believed to have taken the prophet and other religious dignitaries to heaven.

Various etymologies of the term *meuseukat* are found. Some people hold that it derives from *seukat* (Ar., "to pray" [Isjkarim et al. 1980–81, 114]), or from *meuseuh* (Acehnese,"to move while seated" [Bakar et al. 2001, 857]). Djajadiningrat thought the term refers to the "wailings of Muscat," a town on the coast of Oman, on the Arabian peninsula (Bakar et al., 2001, 602; Djajadiningrat 1933).

It is true that Malay languages tend to add vowels between consonants, and that the Acehnese usually substitute the vowel "eu" for the Malay "u"; thus, Muscat could be pronounced *meuseukat*. However, there is no hard evidence to support this theory.[8]

The different kinds of *ratéb* sitting dances may have been named after various places of origin on the trade routes between Aceh and the Middle East. Thus, Djajadiningrat's entry on *ratéb* distinguishes between Aceh's *ratib al-Haddad* (*ratéb Hadat in Acehnese*),[9] *ratéb meuseukat* and *ratéb Malabari*. The implication is that merchants from Haddad in Shi'a Persia, the port of Muscat in Oman, and the Malabari coast of India, respectively, taught Islamic religion and practices to Acehnese while awaiting the winds to bring them and their cargoes back to their homes. Naming Muscat as the place of origin of *ratéb meuseukat* makes sense to some Acehnese as it is located on a regular sea trade route between Oman, next to Hadramaut Arabia; moreover, a popular *meuseukat* song text reads and has been translated as follows: "Bismillah ratep meuseukat"/"Bismillah, the wailings of Muscat";"Taloe peuet urat geupuphon sambong"/"Four ropes begin to intertwine." This reference to "the wailings of Muscat" is but one of several images of despair and disaster portrayed (see the *saleum* of a *meuseukat* performance in Transcription 1 [*meuseukat*] in Kartomi, 2004, 37–38). Although the texts sometimes refer to tragic events, their mood is not tragic, nor does the dance have a sad character; it is normally performed in a spirited, vigorous and joyful manner (Ibid.).

Despite the theories that *meuseukat* derived from Persian or Middle Eastern forms, many local people believe that its specific structure, style and texts that often involve west Acehnese legendary figures originated in west Aceh (pers. comm., Marzuki Hassan [born in Blang Pidie], 2005). Moreover, some religious songs performed in *ratéb meuseukat* on religious holy days (including *Maulid Nabî*), circumcisions (*sunat rasul*), and weddings and other "ceremonies allowed by religion" have been credited to Teungku Cik Dikila, an *ulama* from Seunagan (a town now called Jeuram in Kabupaten Nagan Raya).

A legend recounted by storytellers holds that *meuseukat* was transplanted in the 11th century BCE to Blang Pidie, a town in the present-day *kabupaten* of Aceh Barat Daya (Daud 1994–95, 20–22). A certain Teungku Muhammad, of the *gampong* Rumoh Baro (later known as Desa Medang Ara) in the Kuta Karang kingdom (now called Daya), traveled across the country to study Islam in the famous center of religious knowledge, Samudra Pasai, on Aceh's east coast. From there, he sailed to Baghdad where he met Ibnu Maskawaihi (Akoon Miskawahi), the supposed inventor of *ratéb meuseukat*. Teungku Muhammad returned home to Blang Pidie in Kuta Karang kingdom and became leader of the local religious education center in the village of Rumoh Baro (later known as Gampong

Medang Ara) in the Blang Pidie district. There, the legend holds, he taught the version of *ratib* (Ar.) *meuseukat* that he had learned to female students and other women of all ages from the surrounding villages. Almost as an afterthought, the story tells of a woman named T. Aji Rakibah, daughter of Habib Seunagan, who developed the modern movements, floor plans, body percussion, and secular songs of the *meuseukat* dance and taught them to girls and women in Blang Pidie some time in the 19th century. Subsequently, the genre spread throughout west and south Aceh.

Clearly, this legend needs to be read critically for possible gender bias and historical inaccuracy. Firstly, it attributes the dance's creation to men, though it was traditionally performed only by and for women. Moreover, the myth holds that its actual techniques were invented by a woman: T. Aji Rakibah, daughter of Habib Seunagan. Secondly, as the historical Baghdadian, Akoon Miskawahi, actually lived in the tenth or 11th century (the Buyid era), which was six centuries earlier than Teungku Muhammad's birth, he could not, of course, have transplanted the genre into west Aceh during his lifetime. The reference to Persia is not inappropriate; given *meuseukat's* strong body percussion element, it possibly developed from a Persian Shi'a model, but its true history is unknown.

Meuseukat's recent history is more certain. As Daud (1994–95) has documented, in 1961 an active troupe of women were still performing *ratéb meuseukat* in the village of Beutong, where the local district leader Camat H. T. Al Amin Kaan and his wife had been promoting it. Elsewhere it had reportedly almost died out (Ibid.). This may have been due to the fact that men were prohibited by *adat* (traditional custom) from watching performances and therefore the men running the relevant government offices did not promote it. In the early 1970s, Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture asked the people in the Blang Pidie area (including Beutong) to identify their artistic genres. At first, *ratéb meuseukat* was not included in the list, as local (and male) government officials were ignorant of the form (Ibid.).

Ibu Cut Asiah, the remarkable female choreographer and dance teacher from Meulaboh mentioned above, heard in 1972 that *meuseukat* was still being performed in the village of Beutong (Meulaboh, 1982). She arranged to visit some elderly female dancers in the village to learn the local *meuseukat* movements, songs, and body percussion techniques, and, on her return to Meulaboh, she created new choreographies based on them. Eventually, her troupe performed the dance many times, including at celebrations run by the governor of west Aceh. The Education and Culture branch of the local government then presented her *meuseukat* choreographies in the capital of Banda Aceh, where it was proclaimed as a regional treasure that deserved provincial recognition. This revival that she

engineered was so successful that her choreographies were recommended for performance at provincial festivals and formal government events, and for troupes embarking on national tours. Eventually, it was performed by hundreds of female troupes inside and outside of Aceh, in Acehnese diasporas abroad, and even on international tours, though in the latter case it was sometimes appropriated by male performers.

Arguably, then, the most convincing theory of the course of *meuseukat's* development over the past century is that a series of female artists developed its repertoire of songs, dances, and body percussion textures, beginning in the late 19th century with Ibu T. Aji Rakibah's composition of the songs, dance movements, body percussion, and choreography. Creative development of *meuseukat* continued from the 1970s and 1980s with Ibu Cut Asiah's discovery, research, performance, choreographies, and revival of the genre, and with the subsequent creation of new choreographies based on their predecessors by many other artists in Aceh and the diaspora in the past two decades. The available evidence indicates that *meuseukat* was successfully regenerated across the generations and survived against all odds to this day, though in transformed contexts and styles.

An Analysis of a *Meuseukat* Performance

As will become apparent in the following section, one of the most striking components of a *meuseukat* performance is its style of body percussion, that is, the beating of a human body part on another body part to create rhythmic sounds, ranging from sudden loud claps to intricate musical episodes of interlocking rhythms and timbres. In *meuseukat,* a form of quasi-body percussion (beating a part of one's body on a non-bodily surface) is also used, that is, performers beat their hand, or hands, on the floor to the front, side, or back.[10] I shall now describe a *ratéb meuseukat* performance with religious texts.[11] To follow the flow of performance, please see the Transcription (1) of Figure 9.4.

Ten barefoot female dancers stepped onto the stage—each wearing a Muslim hat, long-sleeved blouse, a *slendang* folded so that its two ends extend vertically down each side of the bodice, a *songket* (silver-thread) waist wrap-around, antique jewelry and black trousers—and stood in a row with their palms raised facing the audience. With a lowered gaze, they knelt down on their heels with both arms raised so that their thumbs met vertically at shoulder level, making the *saleum* ("greeting") movement as a gesture of respect to members of the audience (Figure 9.5).

Then the *aneuk syahé* soloist sang the "Saleum" ("greeting") song (Figure 9.4). The four melodic phrases, in duple meter, are based on three pitch levels, with

A *Meuseukat* Performance

Key:

- un = beat right hand on left lower shoulder
- wie = beat left hand on right lower shoulder
- un = beat right hand on left thigh
- wie = beat left hand on right thigh
- un = beat right hand on floor to the front
- un = beat right hand on floor to left
- un = beat right hand on floor to right
- = vertical clap
- = beat both hands on lower shoulders
- = clap hands above head
- = clap a neighbour's hand
- = silence, but dancers moving

Transcription 1: SALEUM

Music transcription by Margaret Kartomi
Recorded by Iwan D Amir in Banda Aceh, August 2004
Computer realisation by Bronia Kornhauser

♩ = 112

ANEUK SYAHÈ (singer): Bis-mil- lah a-wai lon peu-phonLon tuengtu- ron, a-sai bak

SAF (row of body percussion dancers): un wie un wie un wie un wie un wie

ANEUK SYAHÈ (singer): mu - la Ber - seu - mang - at ra - tep meu -

gliss.

SAF (row of body percussion dancers): un wie un wie un wie un wie un wie

gets faster — slows down

ANEUK SYAHÈ (singer): -seu - kat Ta - loe peu - et ji - noe ka - moe ba

SAF (row of body percussion dancers): un wie un wie un wie un wie un wie

Figure 9.4. Transcription 1, a *meuseukat* performance "Saleum."

the lowest-pitched tone serving as the final tone and the tone on which repeated note passages occur in bars 5–6 and 11–12. The singer-dancers beat their right hands on their left lower shoulders (or upper breasts) on each odd-numbered metric pulse while simultaneously beating their left hands on their right thighs, alternating then on the even-numbered pulses to beat their left

Figure 9.5. Photo 1, female *ratéb meuseukat* dancers perform at a wedding in Jakarta, August 2004, showing the *saleum* greeting movement. (photo courtesy of Iwan Dzulvan Amir)

hands on their right lower shoulders while beating their right hands on their left thighs (Figure 9.6).[12]

The two phrases in Transcription 2 (Figure 9.7), "Lamnyan Lon Kisah," are distinctive because they combine triple and duple rhythms and have a restricted three-tone range. The phrases also alternate between slightly higher and lower pitches for tone 3 (the lower one being the final tone); this feature occurs in many other Acehnese melodies that have a Persian or Arabic flavor, probably based on borrowed scales that contain a neutral-tuned third (between 300–400 cents), which the Acehnese ear interprets in higher and lower pitch levels.

In the performance the dancers produced five different body percussion sounds/movements in a cycle of eight beats. The body percussion began with a light right-hand beat on the floor followed by a heavy left-hand beat on the right thigh, thus emphasizing the upbeat leading to the first downbeat of the next measure. From then on, only the first downbeat of each measure was marked by body percussion, including a right-hand beat on the floor to the left, a left-hand beat on the right lower shoulder, and finally a double lower shoulder beat that marks the end of the cycle (Figure 9.8).

In Transcription 3 (Figure 9.9), "Burak Meunari" ("the flying horse dance") comprises an ascending then a descending phrase, followed by a leap of a fourth, ending on tone 5. Each of the two cycles in Transcription 3 comprise two

Figure 9.6. Photo 2, the female *ratéb meuseukat* dancers perform the movement with left hands on right shoulders and right hands on left thighs, 2004. (photo courtesy of Iwan Dzulvan Amir)

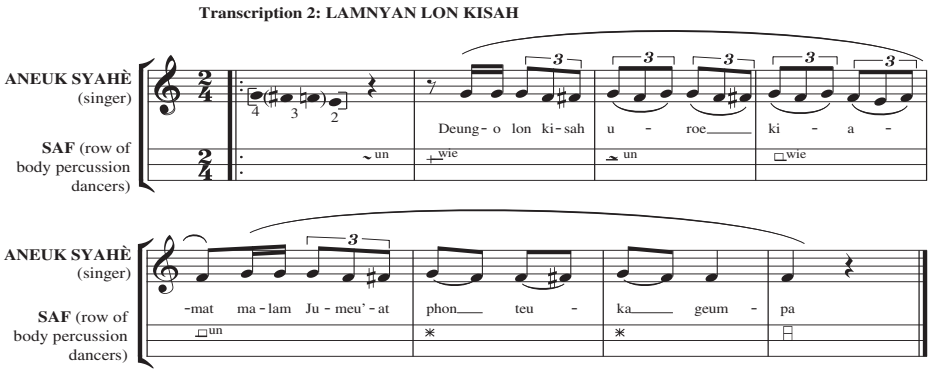


Figure 9.7. Transcription 2, a *meuseukat* performance "Lamnyan Lon Kisah."

melodic phrases set to the same tones as the previous song, but sounding an octave higher and adding a tone 2 to serve as an anacrusis to the central tone on the first downbeat of each phrase.

Cycle 1 of the song begins with four measures of silent movement, with which the dancers marked each pulse of the cycle by stretching their left hands out to the front, then immediately stretching out their right hands to

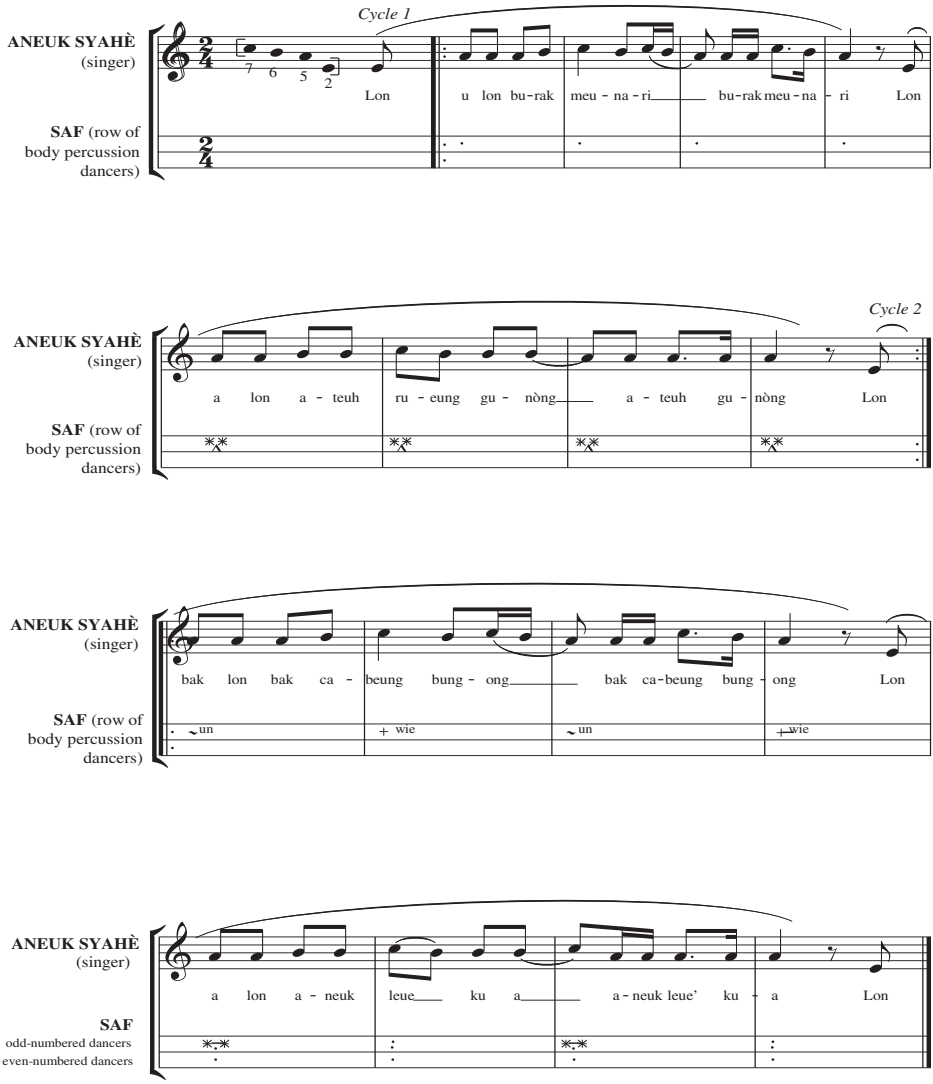
Figure 9.8. Photo 3, the female *ratéb meuseukat* dancers perform the double lower shoulder movement that marks the end of the cycle, 2004. (photo courtesy of Iwan Dzulvan Amir)

join their left, moving both hands upwards in a half-circle and then both hands downwards in a half-circle. The series of four movements was repeated and the cycle ended as the dancers clapped their hands above their heads four times (Figure 9.10).

At the beginning of cycle 2, the dancers extended their right hands down to beat the floor, then beat their left hands on their left thighs, and repeated those two movements, alternating between the raised and lowered positions. In the second half of the cycle, the dancers divided into two groups. Even-numbered dancers lifted both arms upwards to clasp the hands of their neighbors to the right and left, while alternate members of the odd-numbered group either kneeled on their heels and clapped the hands of their neighbors to the right and left or performed a downward stretching-out movement while touching their neighbors' hands. These movements were repeated for a minute or so, creating the effect of a wave (Figure 9.11).

The "Saleum Top" ("closing greeting") section began with slow singing and dancing without body percussion, with the same silent body movements as in the opening "Saleum" and with the row of kneeling dancers bowing their heads and raising their thumbs and palms vertically to forehead level while increasing to a very fast tempo. Then, the dancers humped over and extended their vertically held hands just above the floor and ended suddenly with a hand on each thigh (Figure 9.12).

Transcription 3: BURAK MEUNARI



Note: the dancers divided into two odd- and even-numbered groups in the last 4 bars.

Figure 9.9. Transcription 3, a *meuseukat* performance "Burak Meunari."

Body Percussion in *Meuseukat* Performances

How is it that Aceh, uniquely in Indonesia, developed the art of body percussion to such heights of expressiveness? How did it come about that song accompaniments in genres such as *meuseukat* consist only of body percussion sounds, despite

Figure 9.10. Photo 4, the female *ratéb meuseukat* dancers perform the movement clapping their hands above their heads, 2004. (photo courtesy of Iwan Dzulvan Amir)

Figure 9.11. Photo 5, female *ratéb meuseukat* dancers perform the movement clasping each others' hands, 2004 (photo courtesy of Iwan Dzulvan Amir)

the fact that Acehnese culture is rich in musical instruments that are used to accompany other vocal music or in purely instrumental contexts?[13] Some Acehnese to whom I spoke said they think that body percussion is indigenous, citing the fact that breast-beating and clapping are mentioned more than once

Figure 9.12. Photo 6, female *ratéb meuseukat* dancers perform a movement with hands crossed on thighs, 2004. (photo courtesy of Iwan Dzulvan Amir)

in an 18th-century Acehnese literary epic that describes men and women striking their bodies to express religious emotion.[14] Others say it has a Muslim religious origin and meaning. Acehnese breast-beating in the male *seudati* dance resembles the religiously expressive beating of the breasts in Shi'a Muslim Iran (see Farshad 2002), to which Aceh is geographically linked across the Indian Ocean and the adjoining Arabian Sea. And, rows of male or female singer-dancers in parts of the Muslim world from Iran, India, and Malaysia to Aceh and West Sumatra, and from Turkey to Morocco around the Mediterranean, sing Muslim or secular texts to their own polyrhythmic body percussion, though mostly in a simpler form than that in Aceh.

The main musical principle on which the body percussion/movement is based is cyclic form, a principle that is found in much of the instrumental and vocal music across Southeast Asia. In *meuseukat* performances, each cycle usually lasts 16 or 32 beats, with the last beat marked by a cadential stroke, which also serves as the first beat of the next cycle. The cycles also underlie the vocal parts and the choreographic patterns of body movement invented by the *syéh* and taught to the dancers in rehearsals. One of the simplest cycles comprises pairs of alternating double sounds/movements, such as the simultaneous *un/wie* (a right-hand beat on the left thigh and a left-hand beat on the right chest) followed by a simultaneous *wie/uneun* (a right hand beat on the left thigh and a left hand beat on the right upper chest), which alternate in each 16-beat cycle (i.e., two alternating sounds/movements multiplied by 8 equals 16 per 16-beat cycle).

This and some other cyclic rhythms are shown in the transcription of the *saleum* section of a *meuseukat* performance (Figure 9.4).

Whether in a competitive performance between two troupes or a stage performance, there is an infinite variety of combinations of body percussion sounds/movements and their timing within and between the solo singing and choral responses, the long sung episodes of storytelling and posing and answering riddles and questions by one side to the other. This interplay of factors is determined partly through the *syéh*'s and *aneuk syahe*'s discussions before performing and partly on the improvisatory whim of the *syéh* and/or *aneuk syahè*.

The performance of the religious *meuseukat* differs very little from that of a *meuseukat* on secular themes performed in a rural village. Both religious and secular performances differ greatly, however, from performances on either religious or secular themes at modern festivals and competitions, where very fast tempi, virtuosity, and extreme compactness achieved by extremely disciplined groups are highly rated. In new female dances featuring body percussion, especially the seated *tari masal* (mass dances for government occasions), choreographers still choose to include the traditional clapping, finger-snapping, double thigh and upper breast-beating, and stamping movements, but they add new forms of body percussion such as tapping one's right elbow with the left hand and vice versa, tapping the left knee with the right hand and vice versa, and clapping cupped hands horizontally while moving one's head and body to face the right then the left. Moreover, the mass dances usually specify instrumental accompaniment, not just solo or group singing as in the classical dances, which tends to drown out the body percussion, indeed to make it superfluous.

Government and Commercial Appropriation of *Meuseukat*

Aspects of gender power and authority in Aceh are located not only in small, female-dominant home and village sites, but also in large-scale, male-dominant, government and commercial realms in which *meuseukat* has recently been transformed. In the Suharto era, *meuseukat* was one of the revived female arts that were used for political purposes through its song texts. Performances were extensively funded to spread government propaganda through newly written song texts,[15] especially during election campaigns, as well as for welcoming guests at official functions, national day celebrations, and provincial or urban district festivals. Although male genres were also used, organizers frequently gave priority to beautiful young girls dancing and singing in elegant, polished shows suitable for international guests and the media.

In the post-New Order *reformasi* period (1998–), less funding at all levels of government has been available for the arts in Aceh. The old pro-Suharto political

texts are, of course, no longer sung, but new texts and choreographies are being created under the influence of a growing commercial agenda for the arts and an increasing puritanism among fundamentalist Muslim leaders who still express strong disapproval of females appearing on a stage. However, many *ulamas* now view performances of *meuseukat* with religious texts having a Muslim flavor. In the more liberal climate of urban environments, especially in diaspora communities (as in Jakarta and Melbourne), men and women are even allowed to dance *meuseukat* together in close physical contact, to the chagrin of the moral guardians and traditionalist *ulamas*. Some artists also disapprove on the aesthetic grounds that, 1) mixing the genders makes for a less compact performance, given the different body sizes, strengths, and personalities of men and women performers, and that, 2) the combination lessens the all-important performance precision required to perform some of the more virtuoso, very fast group movements (Marzuki Hassan, 2005).

Three recent developments may have an impact on the future of the west Acehnese music/dance art forms, namely the tsunami tragedy in 2004 with the subsequent quakes, the end of decades of war in 2005, and the fast-developing commercial music industry. Firstly, the official female death toll from the tsunami in coastal Aceh was three times that of the male toll (*Kompas*, 28 March 2005, 5),[16] and even higher in west Aceh, which was closest to the quake's epicenter; many artists—female and male—were lost to the waves. For both genders, the subsequent rebuilding of the arts and replacing thousands of lost musical instruments is a slow process, given the lack of funding and the greater need to reconstruct basic physical conditions. As reported extensively in the media, however, some non-government organizations in Meulaboh are reportedly using the performing arts to rebuild morale, especially through classes for children.[17] Reconstruction, however, is likely to take decades at the current slow rate. Secondly, the removal of martial law and the declaration of peace between the government and GAM (*Gerekan Aceh Merdeka*; Free Aceh Movement) from mid-2005 have enabled artists to rehearse and perform more frequently (though some doubt that peace will last). Thirdly, the effects of the largely commercially driven Acehnese music industry have favored the more marketable performances and the decline of traditional genres such as *meuseukat*. Audio and audio-visual recordings of popular culture far outweigh traditional art forms, especially in the growing Acehnese diaspora communities of Jakarta and Medan and smaller Acehnese communities in towns such as Yogyakarta, Padang, and Sibolga. The story of *meuseukat* is one of successful transmission and regeneration across the generations, and against all odds, whether these are gender discrimination, war, military oppression, years of curfews, tsunamis, quakes, government appropriation, or commercial pressures.

Conclusion

Traditional forms of *meuseukat* and other key female genres of west Aceh reflect their people's particular historical syncretic blend of Muslim and non-Muslim beliefs and culture, and their possible historical links to other Muslim countries or areas, such as the Malabar coast of India and the Arabian Gulf. Thus, most groups alternate between presenting *meuseukat* performances that have texts on a Muslim theme and those with secular texts that have, nevertheless, an Islamic flavor. The genres also express the priorities in the lives of the women, including their personal and social pursuit of *dakwah* (reinforcing and promoting piety) and their efforts to maintain west Acehnese Muslim traditions. Despite male dominance in most spheres of life, both males and females see this remarkable female music, dance, and body percussion form that is *meuseuket* as a quintessential part of west Acehnese identity.

Of the various legends and theories of the origins and development of *meuseukat*, one of the most powerful is the culture memory of the initiatives of two west-coast Acehnese women artists separated in time by almost a century, one in the colonial era and the other in the Suharto era. These pioneers are remembered for how they effectively influenced the course of the performing arts, with many women continuing its transmission to the next generation by creating new choreographies and teaching the dance to many thousands of children—Acehnese and non-Acehnese—throughout Indonesia and in diaspora communities abroad.

Major social and musical change that occurred in post-colonial Aceh from 1945 onwards resulted in a degree of relaxation of the strictly gender-segregated performances and audiences in the towns. However, in many west-coastal Acehnese villages, the *ulamas* have still wanted to avoid the undesired results of gender-mixing by trying to ban female welcome dances favored by the former Acehnese nobility and the Dutch in colonial times, and by leaders of the post-colonial governments ever since.

From the early 1980s, *meuseukat* was among the genres that were appropriated by the government, corporations, and the media, resulting in performances that were greatly shortened, secularized, and speeded-up to achieve the desired entertainment value; the new versions have even included mixed couples dancing. Autocratic Indonesian government intervention in the arts scene in the Suharto era (with a few portents in the previous Sukarno era) resulted in the aestheticization of both the female and the male performing arts, partly as a means of building up support for the government, with politically adaptive troupes given prominence in the media.

Meuseukat and other west Acehnese female vocal and body percussion genres were virtually unknown outside the province until the late 1970s, when they began to be transplanted into the main Acehnese diasporas in Jakarta and Yogyakarta and overseas (such as in 1980s Sydney), and became known through international tours by Acehnese troupes. In the *reformasi* period (1998–), however, both female and male performances have diminished in number, not only because the men and women of Aceh have been able to devote less time and energy to the arts as they struggled with decades of separatist-Indonesian Army conflict until mid-2005,[18] but also because they received virtually no government funding for the arts, and, since December 2004, they suffered intensely from destruction caused by the tsunamis, followed by the frustratingly slow efforts made at reconstruction. Meanwhile, with the recent introduction of *Shari'a* law in Aceh, female song-dance texts tend to be more devout and classifiable as *kesenian Islam*; consequently, artists' costumes tend to be more modest.

Versions of the sitting dances are now performed as one of the "national" genres by thousands of young Indonesians from many ethno-linguistic groups outside Aceh, whose members cannot speak Acehnese but learn the song texts by rote. Young people like to perform them because the movements and group song melodies can be learned easily in group rehearsals. However, the modern choreographies are strictly for the young because they are so physically demanding, requiring performers to dance from a base kneeling position and strike their own bodies in fast patterns to create intricate rhythmic patterns. Young people also like to perform them as they serve as a means of socializing, and because the performances reach such dizzying speeds that they continue to astound and please their audiences with their virtuosity.

Although the female death toll from the tsunami and earthquake was three times that of the male number and many female artists died, the future of female performing arts in west Aceh seems assured, given the essential social role that the women play in art and society as well as in the current post-tsunami reconstruction. Certainly, there are no signs that the need for female artistic performances—for ceremonial, family, and state occasions, for the media, and above all, for providing channels of artistic expressivity of the women and the education and delight of children—is dissipating.

Acknowledgements

On my field trip with H. Kartomi, Marzuki Hassan, and Iwan Amir in and around Meulaboh, Kabupaten Aceh Barat (west Aceh district) in January 1982, we were very grateful to be able to record some especially fine female

performances by the dance group *sanggar Phô Cut Nyak Dhien,* led by the dancer, choreographer, and dance researcher Ibu Cut Asiah, her lead singer Siti Jeuram, and her husband and troupe administrator, Bp Zakariah bin Hadi. In February–March 2003, we recorded performances of the same female genres by troupes from the *kabupaten* of Aceh Barat and the neighboring districts of Aceh Jaya, Nagan Raya, and Aceh Barat Daya at the *Festival Tari dan Seurunè Kalèe* held in Lhok Seumawe. Among the troupes was *sanggar Cempala Kuneng Aceh Jaya*, founded in 1984 and led by a former pupil of Ibu Cut Asiah, Ibu Rohani of Jaya Jalang village, 90 kilometres north of Meulaboh, where her singing teacher, Ibu Hasana of Daya Baro village, lived. In Meulaboh, we were greatly assisted by the local office of the national Department of Education and Culture, and in Lhok Seumawe by Bp Tarmizi A. Karim, Bupati of North Aceh, Bp Muhammad Rizal. I wish to thank Iwan Dzulvan Amir for allowing me to use his DVD recordings and photo stills of a *meuseukat* performance that he recorded in Jakarta in 2004. I was gratified to meet and interview Ibu Cut Asiah again in March 2007 in her Meulaboh home, though she had lost her husband and dance-class building in the 2004 tsunami, and to record performances of her original choreographies. I am also pleased to acknowledge the grants received from the Australian Research Grants Scheme and the support extended by the School of Music—Conservatorium at Monash University for this research. Bronia Kornhauser copied my music transcriptions, Phil Scamp copied my charts, and Paul Watt served as my research associate.

Notes

1. *Meuseukat* is popular in the four *kabupaten* (districts) of Aceh Barat, Nagan Raya, Aceh Barat Daya, and Aceh Selatan. Although Sumatra stretches from northwest to southeast, the coastal areas are referred to as "the west," "the east," "the north," and "the south," respectively.

2. Three strains of Islam were practiced over the centuries: the Sunni/Shafi'i *madzhab* (school of jurisprudence), the Shi'a sect, which operated from the 18th century along Sumatra's and Aceh's west coast, and a syncretic form of Islam that contained both Sufi and pre-Muslim beliefs and practices. *Meuseukat* belongs to the latter strain. The *tabut* processional music formerly practiced in Meulaboh and other west-coast towns (Kartomi 1986) and the death-related female dances *pho* and *malelang* in west and south Aceh (all of which I have recorded) may belong to the Shi'a strain.

3. *Daboh,* which is centered in west Aceh and also performed elsewhere in Aceh, is a Sufi-style display of religious concentration with *diké* and frame drum playing (see Kartomi 1992).

4. Acehnese sultans and *ulama* from the early 17th century on, whether Sufi- or Shi'a-oriented, believed that not only through *dhikr* but also by imitating the perfect man, Muhammad, one could ultimately reach union with the divine (Brakel 1975, 59).

5. Some of this paragraph is based on Amir 2006, 190–191.

6. *Rātib* (Ar.) has religious texts, but the Acehnese term *ratéb* is defined as a sitting dance genre that features either religious or secular texts, with or without collective body movement (Bakar 2001, 602). *Ratôh duek/ meuseukat* and *phô* dances are described in Isjkarim *et al.* (1980–81, 114–116 and 179–185), Idris *et al.*, (1993, 122–131), and Kartomi (2004, 33–41).

7. This performance was transcribed and reproduced in stenciled form in 2001 by Daud *et al.* 1994–95, 25–28.

8. According to Mussalam bin Ahmed Al Kathiri, head of the Oman Centre for Traditional Music, *Meuseukat Oman* in Arabic is the plural form of the word for "music" or "derived from music" (pers. comm., August 2007).

9. This *ratéb* is a *dikir* (*zikir*) to be recited every evening after *mahgrib* or *isya'* prayers by those initiated into the brotherhood founded by Mawlana al-Haddad. In a tradition directly linked to Shi'ism and contested by Sunni teachings, a master from his brotherhood who shelters a student actually links him in this way to his ancestor, the Prophet Muhammad (Amir 2006, 294).

10. In the standing dances, such as *phô*, other forms of quasi-body percussion may occur, such as stamping one's foot on the floor.

11 Recorded by Iwan Dzulvan Amir at a wedding in Jakarta in October 2004.

12. The key of body percussion sounds/movements in the transcription indicates only right or left hand specifically and shoulder and thigh generically.

13. For a discussion of Acehnese musical instruments, see Kartomi 2005.

14. The *Hikayat Potjut Muhamat* describes people beating their breasts *(leumpah dada' djipoh droe tumba dada)* in Shi'a-like expressions of grief (Drewes 1979, 245).

15. For example, the *meuseukat* song text segment "Bapak Suharto, pemimpin nanggroe nyang bijaksana" translates as "Mr Suharto, wise leader of the country" (see text in Kartomi CD booklet: 1998, disk 2, item 1), and a *seudati inong* text "Daerah Aceh le that kemajuan/ Bidang bangunan maju ngon jaya/ Sikula SD sabe ngon SMA/ Ka rap meurata bandum daerah" translates as "The region of Aceh is developing/ There is much activity and progress is in train/ Primary and upper secondary schools/ Are available in almost every area" (Ibid, item 4).

16. The reasons assumed for fewer male deaths include that men were more mobile, could run faster, had better access to cars, and were generally not encumbered with children.

17. Not only famous artists, such as the popular and classical west Acehnese singer Rafly, have recently made many tours to the tsunami victims' camps and reconstruction areas to entertain and teach, but also hundreds of lesser-known artists, some of whom are also rebuilding their home village finances by cooperatives that produce drums and other musical instruments for sale, teaching, and performing.

18. The Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement, GAM) engaged in military conflict with the Indonesian army over the previous two decades.

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10

Islam, Politics, and the Dynamic of Contemporary Music in Indonesia

R. Franki S. Notosudirdjo

In his chapter, R. Franki Notosudirdjo, a composer and ethnomusicologist with decades of experience in Indonesian art and film music, explores the recent phenomenon of Islamic influences in Indonesian contemporary music by looking at the work of composer Trisutji Kamal. Trisutji and other composers who self-identify as Muslim create music that both qualifies as national art and reflects contemporary Indonesian Islam. Like many of her peers who have had opportunities to study abroad and to return to work at a modern music academy, Trisutji employs an eclectic compositional language that is meant to speak to a modern, urban community of Muslim intellectuals. Notosudirdjo considers the content, performance, and reception of one of her pieces in this style, "Persembahan" (A Worship). Composed in the 1990s, this work is a model of national art music, where indigenous Indonesian tonalities, musical instruments and musical techniques are combined with processes, forms, and techniques of Western art music. In addition to materials from Indonesian traditional musics, however, Trisutji also uses texts, musical styles, instruments, and techniques of Islamic ritual and performance to create an innovative hybrid that is both religion and art. Following an astute analysis of "Persembahan" and referring to the musical score that is included in his chapter, the author assesses the reception of Trisutji's work by two different audiences. In the first case, an educated audience of Muslims at a prestigious Jakarta theatre were receptive to Trisutji's work, which succeeded in blurring the boundaries between musical performance and religious ritual. At a second event, a cultural night for the Council of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) members who form part of the new Muslim middle class, the audience was disrespectful and disruptive during the performance of "Penghayatan Bulan Suci" (Revelations of the Islamic Month), another Trisutji work in this vein. Notosudirdjo suggests that, perhaps because they were used to the behavioral norms of popular or traditional music contexts, this group of modern intellectual elite was ill at ease, unable or unwilling to restrain themselves, and clearly unfamiliar with the music concert setting. He lodges the charge that, while ICMI has brought the discourse of Islam

and modernity to the forefront of political and social concerns and encouraged modern Islamic arts innovations, their understanding of Islam in contemporary arts, specifically music, is sorely lacking.

My chapter addresses the intersection of Islam, politics, and modernity in music through the works of Trisutji Juliati Kamal, a prominent and pious Indonesian woman composer. The revival of Islam in Indonesia in the late stage of Suharto's New Order regime (1966–1998) revealed a long-repressive cultural force in the Archipelago. During the colonial era, the Dutch considered Indonesian Muslims to be second-class citizens (Hefner 2000, 15, 32), and Islam was officially dismissed, marginalized, and associated with rural areas and backwardness; this association continued during the New Order period. In Indonesian music, the dismissive stance was apparent in the way the urban middle class negatively viewed musical genres associated with Islam, such as *qasidahan*, a vocal music genre accompanied by a set of frame drums called *rebana*. One of the significant aspects of the revival of Islam, in my opinion, is the disappearance of this negative association among trained middle class and elite, artists, who are now inspired to combine aspects of their art with their faith. The revival phenomenon is demonstrated by the reinvention of *qasidahan* by Trisutji Kamal, whose compositions address issues of modernity within the context of Islamic cultural renewal.

With the intention of shifting his political reliance on military force, Suharto strove to gain support from Muslim intellectual power in the last decade of his reign. In 1990, Muslim intellectuals, with the support of Suharto's regime, founded an Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals known as ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia) (Pabottingi, 2001; see also Latif 2005, 591–600). In addition to having political ambitions, ICMI, as a representative of the (new) modernist Islamic movement, seemed to have an agenda for developing modern Islamic arts. Members of ICMI who were responsible for this project were artists associated with The Jakarta Arts Center, TIM (Taman Ismail Marzuki),[1] such as Danarto (novelist and painter), Abdul Hadi W.M. (poet-scholar), and Ikranegara (actor-director).

TIM was founded in 1968 by Ali Sadikin, then Governor of Jakarta. It was soon known nationwide as the center of contemporary Indonesian arts. This was the center where most of Indonesia's experimental works in music, dance, theater, visual art, and film were produced and staged up to the 1990s. The Indonesian artists associated with TIM came from across the archipelago, such as the aforementioned three ICMI artist members. In the end, TIM turned out to be a solid institution of Indonesian modern arts. One of the strongest foundations of its agenda took form in an arts school called the Arts Institute of

Jakarta, IKJ (Institut Kesenian Jakarta), which was founded inside the TIM compound in 1970.

IKJ consisted of five departments: music, dance, theater, fine art, and film. The educational system was based strictly upon Western ideas, and IKJ was, in fact, modeled upon similar schools in the United States.[2] Trisutji Kamal taught in the Music Department at IKJ. Inside TIM, there were two other related institutions that were associated with the idea of modern arts—the Jakarta Arts Council, DKJ (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta) and the Jakarta Academy, AJ (Akademi Jakarta). The latter stands as the highest body in the hierarchy of institutional network that governs IKJ, DKJ, and TIM. During the New Order period, TIM was granted freedom of expression to a certain degree by the regime. As a result, for the first several decades of its existence, TIM was able to set up a high standard of productivity and excellence in the field of Indonesian modern arts. Up to the 1980s, TIM was practically the only place in the country where people could see the works of Western modern arts figures such as Martha Graham (dance), Arnold Schoenberg (music) and Frederico Fellini (film). In the effort to develop modern Islamic music, TIM actor and director Ikranagara, on behalf of ICMI, approached his colleague Trisutji Kamal to pursue and help realize this new artistic concept.

Trisutji Kamal, a pupil of Henk Bading (Amsterdam Conservatory), was formerly associated with the 1960s generation of composers who subscribed to the Western model of modern music developed earlier by Ki Hadjar Dewantara's and Amir Pasaribu's generations.[3] That musical style is characterized by the use of an approximation of one of the gamelan's pentatonic modes derived from the *pelog* scale and/or Indonesian folk songs as the basic tonal or modal materials of a composition. In the early 1990s, after returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca, Trisutji began to incorporate indigenous instruments and Islamic musico-religious elements in her compositions. The result was very striking, indeed. The most representative of Trisutji's work in this vein is a composition entitled "Persembahan" (A Worship), for Western flute, two poetry reciters ("Dekl" in the notation), two Qori (Quranic chanters), solo soprano, mixed choir (SATB), percussion ("Perk"), a set of Sundanese *kendang* (double-headed drums), a set of *rebana* (frame drums), piano, bass guitar ("B.Git."), acoustic guitar ("A.Git"), and violoncello. (The notation and its pagination provided in this chapter in Figure 10.1 follows the original score.)

"Persembahan" (1992) was Trisutji's first attempt to appropriate Islamic religious elements for a large-scale composition. In this case, Trisutji used Emha Ainun Najib's poems as her text. Emha is a prominent pious Muslim, poet, and musician in his own right. His text was presented in two forms: in poetical recitation and as sung lyrics. Through this arrangement, Trisutji succeeded in

delivering the meaning of the poetry to an audience without any obstacle, unlike the process in which poetry is often set for song, especially if the music composed uses a 12-tone approach or otherwise submerges the text in complexity. By using her technique of juxtaposition, Trisutji was also able to create an exquisite dialogue in the form of call and response between the "declaimers" (poetry reciters) and SATB choir members (see Figure 10.1, pp. 42–45). Moreover, by employing an actor to recite the poem, Trisutji was able to wrap her composition in an eloquent theatrical form. When the piece received its world premiere at *SUITA* ("Suite") in 1992, the actor dressed as a *santri* (pious Muslim) and performed Muslim prayers (*sholat*) on the stage.

As a form of semi-theatrical music genre, the performance aspect of "Persembahan" became highly crucial in reading the piece. In fact, the written composition and its performance created a dialectical perspective for obtaining the full meaning of the piece as a religious, Islamic musical expression. In other words, "Persembahan" was a performative piece that also resembled a long prayer. At the beginning and end, the piece is framed with the sound of accelerating beats of the *bedug*, the large barrel drum used in mosques in Indonesia to announce the call to prayer. Throughout the composition, Trisutji incorporates many elements of Islamic prayer, such as the holy words "Astagfir Allah il adzim" (My Lord, forgive me), "La Illaha Illallah" (There is no God but Allah), "Muhammad ar-rasullallah" (Mohammad the Prophet of Allah), and "Ya Allah Ya Rabbi" (Oh Lord Oh Almighty). These words are, at times, inserted as punctuation into the fabric of the polyphonic musical texture, creating additional beauty (see Figure 10.1, pp. 20–26). Elsewhere, these recited formulae stand by themselves as in the original context (see Figure 10.1, p. 17).

In certain places, Trisutji treats the elements of the *adzan* (call to prayer) in a two-part canonic form. Since the melodic material of these holy words is originally designed in the exquisite melismatic style (not notated in the score) of the Middle Eastern musical tradition, this treatment creates a beautiful heterophonic texture (see Figure 10.1, page 36). In the performance, Trisutji placed the two Qori (Quranic reciters) who recited the *adzan* on opposite sides of the balcony of the theater so that an intriguing stereophonic effect was created. In reality, most Indonesians hear and experience this particular soundscape, only much richer, five times a day (pre-dawn/*Fajr*, noon/*Dhuhr*, afternoon/*Asr*, sunset/*Mahgrib* and evening/*Isha*), and when Muslims perform the prayers that are projected by loudspeakers from the mosques throughout the cities. The prayers often overlap in a rich, polyphonic tapestry.

The poetry of Emha Ainun Najib, which appears below, is also written in the form of prayers:

1)

Tuhanku	My Lord
Ku awali setiap langkahku dengan AsmaMu	I always begin my act by saying with Thy name
Ampunilah kami	Please forgive us
Yang selalu merasa punya nama	who always feel we have a name to be proud of
Yang tak kunjung tahu	who have never realized
bahwa segala sesuatu akan hanya tinggal satu	that everything will be gone but one
Tuhanku	My lord
Adapun di antara beribu mimpiku	There is within thousands of my dreams
cuma satu yang sejati	only one that is really pure
ialah di nafasMu aku menyertai	it is Thy breath that I belong to
Tuhanku	My lord
Jika hak bagimu	If Thou will
perkenankan aku tinggal di dalam diriMu	let me stay in Thy place
agar sesudah lahirku yang ini dan nanti takkan mati	so that after this present and next existence I will never die

2)

Tuhanku	My Lord
Sembahyang bibirku	The praying of my lips
Sembahyang wajahku	The praying of my face
Sembahyang telapakku	The praying of my palms
Sembahyang kulitku	The praying of my skin
Sembahyang dagingku	The praying of my flesh
Sembahyang tulangku	The praying of my bones
Sembahyang uratku	The praying of my muscles
Sembahyang ubun-ubunku	The praying of my fontanel
Sembahyang darahku	The praying of my blood
Sembahyang nafasku	The praying of my breath
Sembahyang makripatku	The praying of my knowledge
Sembahyang pikirku	The praying of my thoughts
Sembahyang rasaku	The praying of my passion
Sembahyang hati jiwaku	The praying of my heart

Sembahyang seleraku	The praying of my taste
Sembahyang heningku	The praying of my silence
Sembahyang Tuhanku	The praying of my Lord
Sembahyang sukmaku	The praying of my soul
Sembahyang keningku	The praying of my forehead

3)

Tuhanku,	My Lord
Dalam pasrahku	in my submission
Kepadamu ingin kuberikan lebih dari yang ku inginkan	To Thee I want to give more than what I can give
namun Engkau terlalu Besar dan Mulia untuk ingin	But Thee art too great and noble for wanting
dan aku hanya sebutir angin	and I am only a piece of wind
tak bisa ku tandingi kasihMu padaku	My love for Thou doesn't stand up for Thy love for me
Tuhanku	My Lord
tapi tak kupunyai lagi pasrah yang lain	I have no other submission but this
Tuhanku	My Lord
anugerahi kami kerendahan hati	Bestow on me a humble heart
untuk senantiasa memohon dan bertanya ke PadaMu	for always begging and asking Thee
apa yang sesungguhnya kami butuhkan	what we really need
apa yang murni kami perlukan	what we purely need
apa yang sejati sejatinya kami dambakan	what we really hope for
Tuhanku	My Lord
berilah kami pengetahuan yang mengandung jiwaMu	give me knowledge that is full with Thy soul
anugerahilah hasrat yang tanpa nafsu	bestow on me a will with no desire
serta cinta yang tak gampang tergoda	and love that is not easily tempted
Ya Allah	Oh Lord
Ya Rachman	Oh the Compassionate
Ya Rahim	Oh the Merciful
Ya Malik	Oh the Proprietor
Ya Quddus	Oh the Holy

The idea of employing this particular religious text, a mixed choir, and a set of *rebana* as the dominant elements gives "Persembahan" the impression of a piece of *qasidahan*, traditional religious music that employs similar musical elements. This impression is felt even more strongly since the entire tonal material

of "Persembahan" is based on the heptatonic *qasidahan* scale of B C D# E F# G A# (used in different transpositions and modifications), which comes from the Arabic musical tradition. This scale, with its characteristic augmented second degree between the 2nd and 3rd scale steps is known as *maqam Hijaz* among Quranic reciters in Indonesia and is derived from the Egyptian performance practice for the melodic *mujawwad* style of recitation that became the standard among reciters following Indonesian independence and increased contact with famous reciters from Egypt and their recordings. For this reason, I would argue that Trisutji was able to reclaim the *qasidahan* musical genre by means of a Western-originated musical concept, system, and instrumentation. As mentioned earlier, *qasidahan* used to be associated with inferior and poor Muslim neighborhoods (*kampungan*) and rural Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). By transforming this *qasidahan* into a modern musical form, I argue further that Trisutji was able to introduce and address the issue of modernity in Islamic cultural context in a very effective and convincing way. By the same token, Trisutji also elevated Indonesian national music to a higher degree of complexity, both from the aesthetic and the ideological points of view.

In the 1950s, the Indonesian art music scene was marked by a debate on the issue of seeking a particular form and identity for Indonesian national music. The parties involved in the debate were strictly divided into three groups: those who proposed a modernized gamelan ensemble and musical style; those who proposed *kroncong* as the musical genre to modernize; and those who proposed *seriosa*, compositions in the styles of modern art music from the West (see Notosudirdjo 2001, 251–88). Therefore, by integrating Islamic elements into her works, Trisutji introduced a new crucial issue into this discourse of national music, one acknowledging the fact that Islam is the religion of the majority. "Persembahan," moreover, also transcended the boundary of traditional music represented by gamelan, popular music represented by *kroncong*, and even art music represented by *seriosa* that were submitted as the musical alternatives in the debate around Indonesian national music. In "Persembahan," Trisutji engages with a high degree of musical complexity that merges at least three musical languages into one piece of musical composition.

This complexity can be discerned in the Western, Indonesian, and Arabic musical components and ideas that Trisutji strove to embrace and develop in "Persembahan." Trisutji employs musical components and ideas from across the globe, namely: (1) a Western musical system, concept, and instrumentation that formed the basis of the entire composition; (2) a Middle Eastern musical scale and rhythm that formed the basis of its tonal material and rhythmical device; (3) an indigenous genre of Islamic music (*qasidahan*) that served as the form of composition; (4) select indigenous instruments (*kendang* and *rebana*) and musical

elements such as the *jaipongan* style of drumming (see Figure 10.1, pp. 44 and 72), plus a rhythmic pattern of East Sumatran *joget Melayu* (Malay dance) (see Figure 10.1, pp. 70–72 of the score) that provided the piece with a strong regional musical flavor; and, (5) a text in the Indonesian language that tied the piece to the ideology of national music.

Based on this analysis, I would argue that "Persembahan" offers one of the most suitable and interesting musical examples of the aesthetics and ideology of national culture and music as defined by Ki Hadjar Dewantara and Professor Bahder Djohan. After Indonesia proclaimed its independence in 1945, Dewantara, then Minister of Education and Culture, defined national culture as consisting of the highlights of local cultures plus highly selected foreign materials. A similar definition is also found in the 1945 Constitution, and, from that time onward, this idea became official Indonesian cultural policy (Soebadio 1985, 13, 23). In 1951, during the Second Congress of National Culture, Djohan, then Minister of Education and Culture, came up with the following definition of national music: "national music is the fusion of the highlights of regional musics" (*musik nasional adalah gabungan puncak-puncak musik daerah*) (Raden 1994, 8–9). Viewing from this perspective, "Persembahan" can be said to fulfill all the necessary requirements of an Indonesian national music.

The affect of Trisutji's music in the context of performance also needs to be considered. The performance of "Persembahan" at the expansive Gedung Kesenian Jakarta (Jakarta Theater Hall) was able to transform the secular space of the hall into a sacred religious space associated with the mosque. During the entire concert, the compositional materials and structure of "Persembahan" allowed Muslim audiences to have a spiritual experience that blended the aesthetic realms associated with both art music and Islamic religious ritual. The aspects of modernity introduced by the composer through "Persembahan" went beyond the paradigm of modern music, in which music is viewed as an autonomous aesthetic manifestation. Indeed, "Persembahan" is a piece of Indonesian contemporary Islamic music with a postmodern approach that dismantles and transcends the modern ideological separation of secular and religious spaces.

By presenting "Persembahan" in this manner, the context of the performance and the reception of the audience became crucial issues. Without contextualizing the performance of "Persembahan" within an appropriate hall and setting for an Indonesian Muslim audience, the reception of the piece would have been completely different. Thus, the context is part of the dialectical strategy for apprehending the meaning of the piece, and the piece's reading must include its performative aspect. Based on my research and my experience during the performance, I assert that the piece's meaning can be fully discerned only through reading "Persembahan" as a performative piece of music wherein the

context of performance and the reception by a sensitive Indonesian Muslim audience have a crucial role in producing it. The realization of "Persembahan" blurred the boundary between musical performance and religious ritual, which, paradoxically, points to the realities associated with the pre-modern as well as postmodern era.

As a realization of ICMI goals, the introduction of Trisutji's works into the Indonesian cultural scene brought the discourse of Islam and modernity to a critical point where the ideology of the modernist social and political Islamic movements (represented by Muslim intellectuals) intersected with the ideology of national music (represented by the state), as well as with the ideology of Indonesian modern arts as represented by the TIM circle. This phenomenon significantly portrays the dynamics of contemporary culture in Indonesia. Due perhaps to the liberal integration of indigenous, Islamic, and Western elements, Trisutji's works also posted an internal challenge to the modernist Islamic movement, which tends to strive for separation of these elements. As we shall see in the following description of the performance of another of Trisutji's modern, nationalist, Islami-inspired compositions, not all Muslim audiences are prepared to receive this integration with the respect normally given to contemporary music performance.

On behalf of ICMI, in 1995 Ikranagara organized a cultural night in Jakarta called "ICMI Cultural Evening," *Malam Budaya ICMI*, and invited hundreds of their members to come with their families. For this occasion, Trisutji performed her new work, "Penghayatan Bulan Suci" (Revelations of the Islamic Month). Although this piece sounded more experimental than "Persembahan," it was still composed within Trisutji's stylistic framework. Interestingly, this event was pivotal in highlighting the contestation of the introduction of cultural modernity, vis-à-vis an academic style of new music composition and the notion of a modern concert hall, into the Muslim urban middle class community, in this case one associated with ICMI. What happened during the concert was that, instead of listening to the music, most audience members from the beginning to the end engaged with themselves, chatted throughout the performance, and produced a huge unintended noisy accompaniment to the music.

This fact indicates that, although many members of Muslim middle class society in Indonesia have been associated with Islamic modernists' social and political movement, they do not seem to be ready to accept the idea of modernity in music, or in new or Islamic art music, as introduced by the TIM artists circle. This group of new modernist Muslim intellectuals within ICMI still obviously perceives an art event as a social gathering—similar to what one would find in both modern popular music settings and traditional gamelan settings—rather than a modern autonomous cultural practice. This evidence points out

that the term "Islamic modernist," that has been used for social and political purposes by many Islamic scholars in Indonesia and abroad, needs to be redefined when it comes to the arts world.

"Persembahan" was performed during the *SUITA* festival of modern art music organized by a musician of the TIM circle: Otto Sidharta. The Muslim audience that came to this festival was mostly familiar with the modern institutions of music, such as the concert hall, festival, the musical content, and the expected behavior. The audience for the ICMI event, on the other hand, while considered "modernist," approached the music from a more local orientation and clearly had little experience with or understanding of the westernized model of etiquette and protocol in such settings. Therefore, the reactions of the two groups of Muslim audience to Trisutji's works, in *SUITA* and the Cultural Evening for ICMI, were distinct. For this reason, I would argue that the two different reactions illuminate the existing ideological gap within modernity as, (1) a Muslim sociopolitical discourse and as, (2) a cultural discourse.

As a newly transformed urban society, most modernist middle class members basically have not yet appreciated music beyond the mainstream of Indonesian popular music genres, such as *dangdut* and *lagu cengeng* (tear-jerking songs).[4] As part of the larger society, Indonesia's relatively new urban Muslim middle class differs little from the rest of the population in terms of musical identity, taste, preference, and overall sophistication. Art music for its own sake—as autonomous, academic creations meant to be appreciated by a discerning, informed, and quiet audience—is a foreign concept based on Western aesthetic principles and practices. For this reason, to introduce Trisutji's academic style of musical composition into this milieu as a representative of Islamic modernists' ideology is highly problematic. This issue points to a sociopolitical injection of a sophisticated style of music appreciation by Indonesian modernist artists associated with TIM, through Trisutji's works, into the revival of Islamic culture in Indonesia.

Historically, however, TIM can be said to be the cultural product of participants of "The Great Debate" (*Polemik Kebudayaan*) who leaned on the West and anti-traditionalism as represented by intellectual figures such as Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana and Sutan Sjahrir (see Holt 1967, 211–15). The debate was centered on the pros and cons of either retaining indigenous cultural values or embracing Western values. Even though a modernist Islamic group, such as Muhammadiyah, did not present an Islamic perspective or take a side in this debate, arguably they would have defended indigenous cultural values over Western ones. Therefore, although the debate result cannot be said to have been productive, the recent alliance between TIM's modernist artists circle (represented by Ikranagara and Trisutji) and the (new) Islamic modernist movement (represented by ICMI) in contemporary Indonesia

marks the beginning of a new era that highlights the tensions between the revival of Islamic culture and the issues of musical modernity.[5]

Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter, I argue first that Trisutji's musical expression strongly embodies the issues of Islam, politics, and modernity and also that any study of such musical and cultural phenomena must incorporate the analysis of performance and reception. The performance of pieces allows us to analyze a crucial musical aspect, that is, the reception by the audience in the social context where the pieces are performed. In my opinion, context and reception became a dialectical element in the endeavor to gain the deeper meaning of the pieces, because works such as "Persembahan" and "Penghayatan Bulan Suci" were not composed or received in a void. The composer wrote them with a highly specific audience in mind: Indonesian Muslims. This is what made Trisutji's works different from those written as art music for the general contemporary music audience.

Trisutji's audience in this context, as well the pieces themselves, has become part of an experimental platform. Those present are a newly formed audience for a newly formed musical idea, namely contemporary Islamic musical compositions. Having said that, however, the two audience settings of "Persembahan" and "Penghayatan Bulan Suci" demonstrated the existence of an ideological gap between groups in the Muslim middle class: those who subscribe to modernity as a sociopolitical project (associated with ICMI's new modernist movement), and those who subscribe to it as also a cultural project (associated with TIM modernist circle). Furthermore, this gap also reflects the tension between ICMI artist members, represented by the TIM modernist circle that strove to impose their notion of cultural modernity, and the majority of ICMI members, a diverse body that has only recently moved into an urban middle class community.

From a different perspective, in her effort to introduce the notion of modernity into Muslim middle class society through Islamic compositions, Trisutji contested the notion of musical modernism associated with her TIM artist circle. The presentation of "Persembahan" at Gedung Kesenian Jakarta (Jakarta Theater Hall), one of the most important institutional components of the TIM's modernist ideology, was able to transcend the sharp separation of musical performance and religious ritual, as well as of secular and religious spaces. Hence, it can be concluded that her piece introduced the idea of postmodernity to the Indonesian contemporary musical context. The successful reception

of "Persembahan" by a Muslim audience was, of course, partly due to its compositional characteristics: a form of new *qasidahan* that invoked strong Islamic elements and religious ritual. I argue that this particular aspect provided a meeting ground between Trisutji's idea of musical modernity and her Muslim middle class audience. The written composition and its performance were able to speak to their audience in the Gedung Kesenian Jakarta with full symbolic codes, both as a musical performance and religious ritual in a blended secular and religious space.

As a final remark, I would like to point toward the issues of history and politics in Indonesia's national music. A dialectical reading of Islamic contemporary music in Indonesia must not ignore these trajectories, as well as the trajectories of modernity and religion, in this case, Islam. Only by combining theoretical and historical approaches with performance studies are we able to gain deeper meanings of Trisutji Kamal's works.

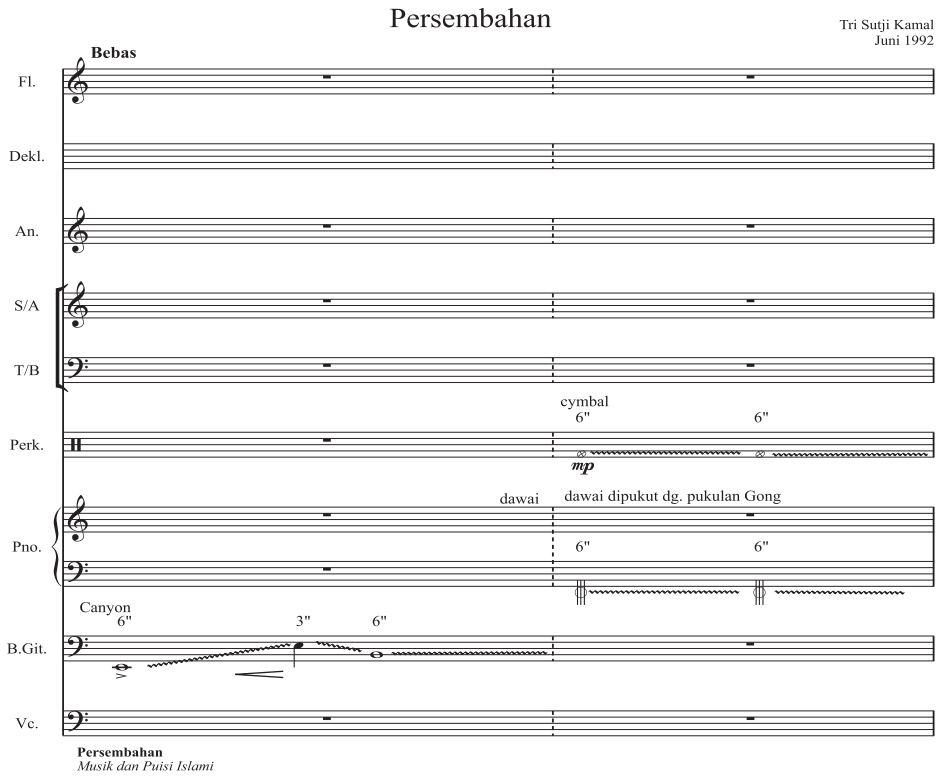


Figure 10.1. Notation for "Persembahan."

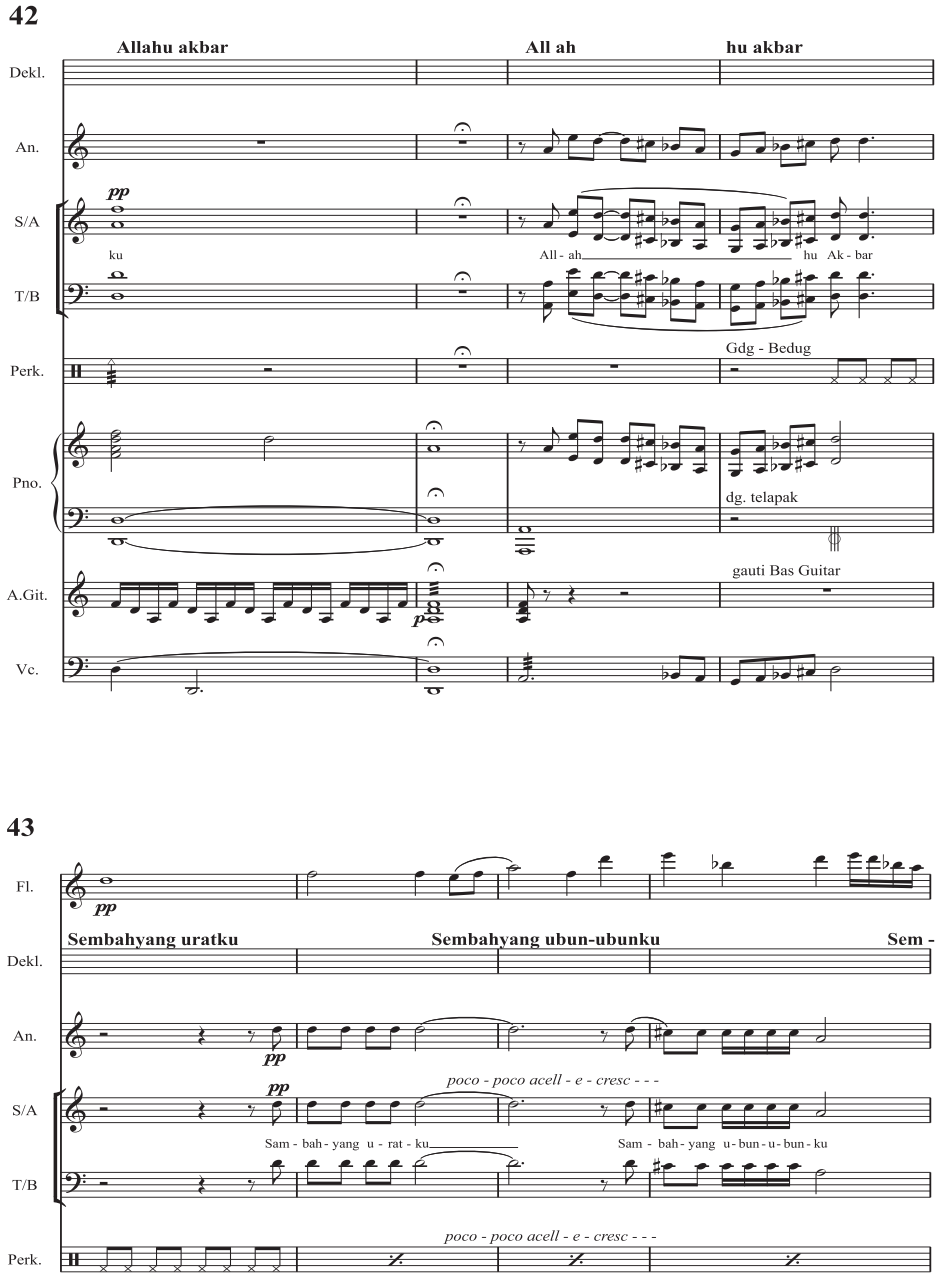


Figure 10.1. Continued

44

Fl. — *cresc molto*

Dekl. — **bahyang darahku** **sembahyang** **nafasku**

An.

S/A — *cresc molto* — *a tempo*

u... sem - bah - yang dar - ah - ku, sem - bah - yang da - rah - ku, sem - bah - yang na - fas - ku

T/B

Perk. — *cresc molto* — Gdg. improv

45

Dekl. — **sembahyang** **makripatku** **sembahyang** **pikirku** **sembahyang rasaku**

S/A — *Riten...* — *a tempo*

sem - bah - yang ma - kri - pat - ku Sem - bah yang pi - kir - ku Sem - bah - yang, sem - bah - yang, sem bah yang Semb yang Ra sa - ku Ra sa - ku

T/B

Pno.

Vc.

17

Bebas - disesuaikan Suasana dan Selera

Fl.

Dekl. — **SYAHADA**

S/A — syahadad — Sopr — Tutti — Alto

T/B — Ten — Bas

Pno.

Figure 10.1. Continued

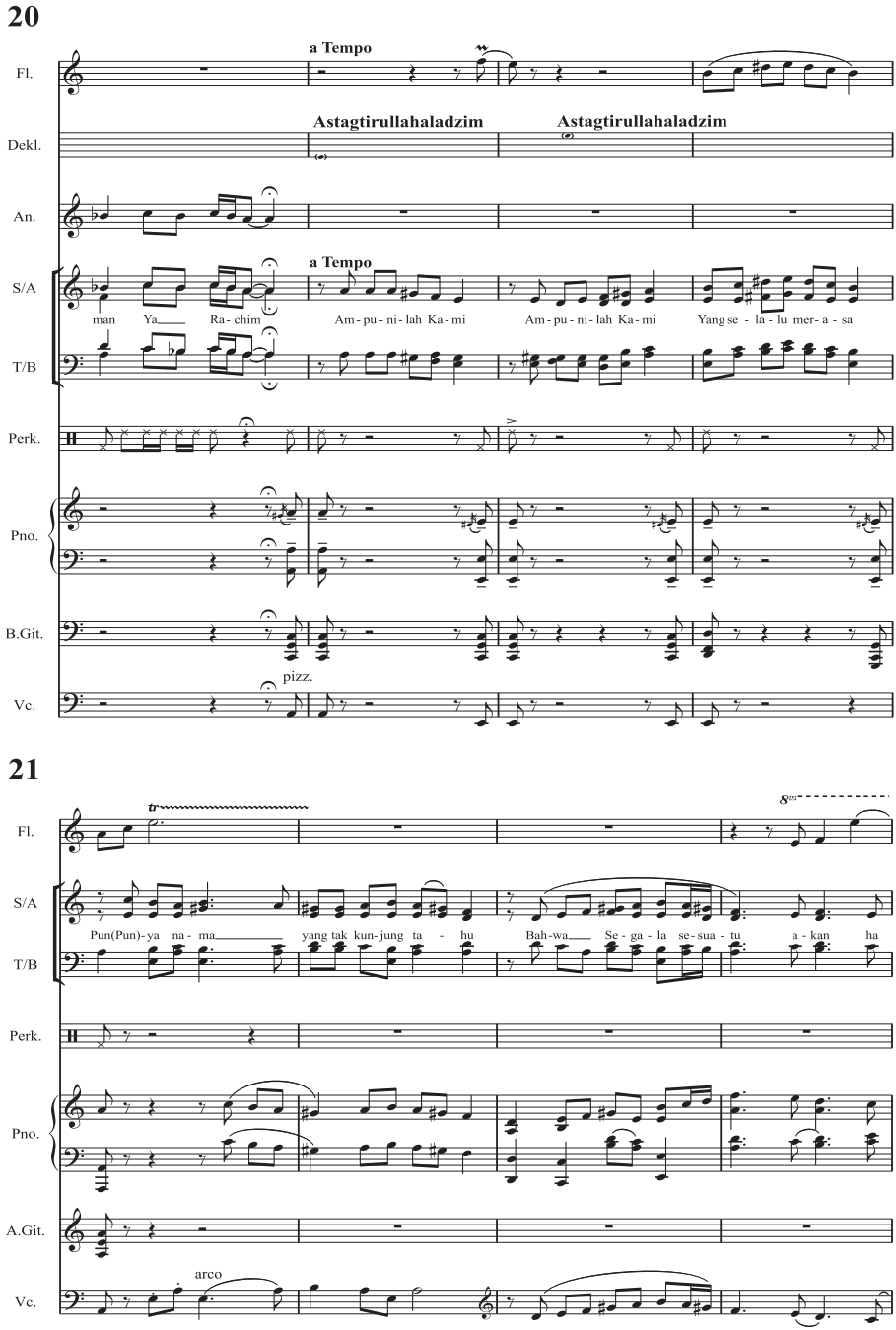


Figure 10.1. Continued

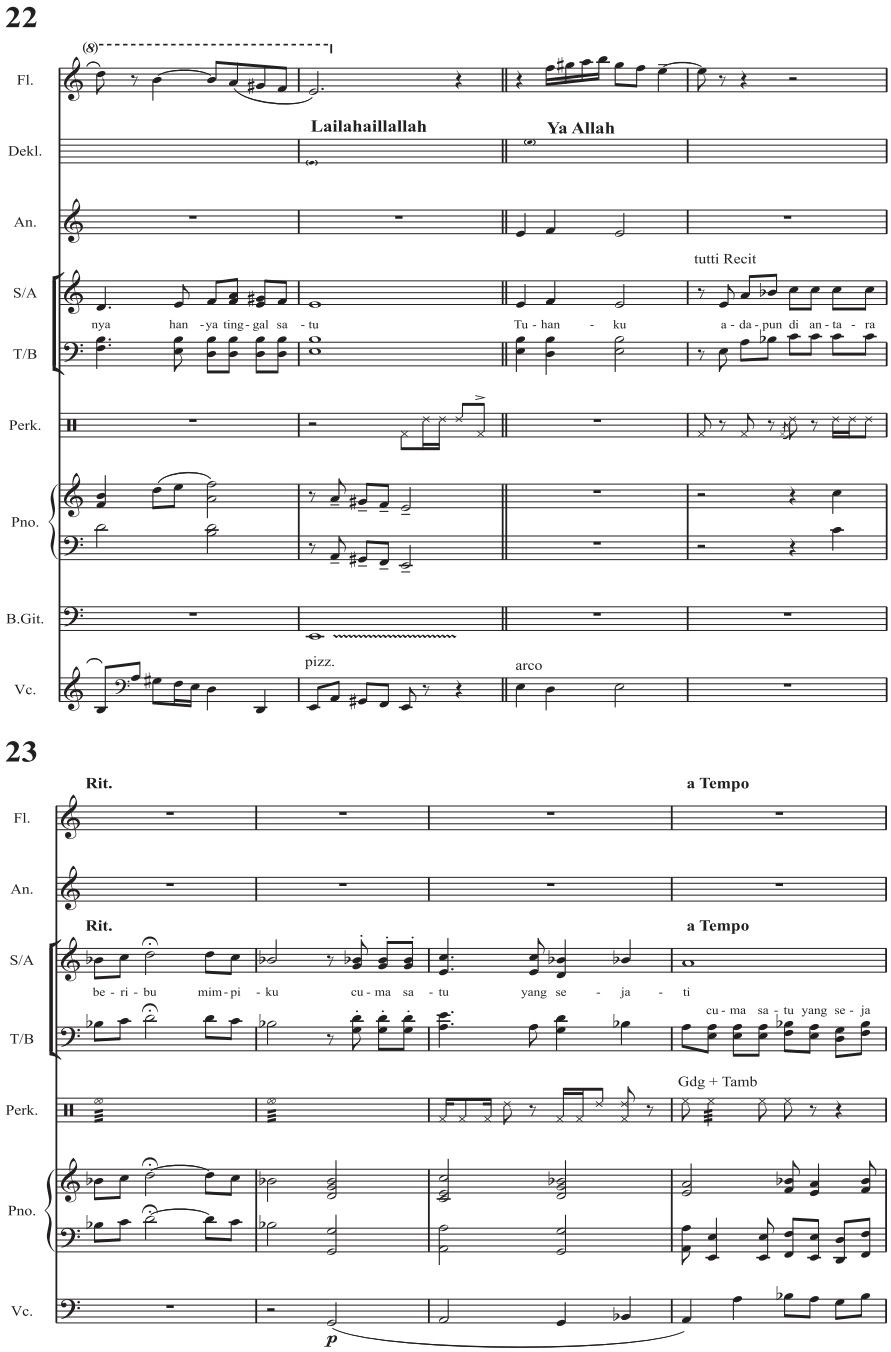


Figure 10.1. Continued

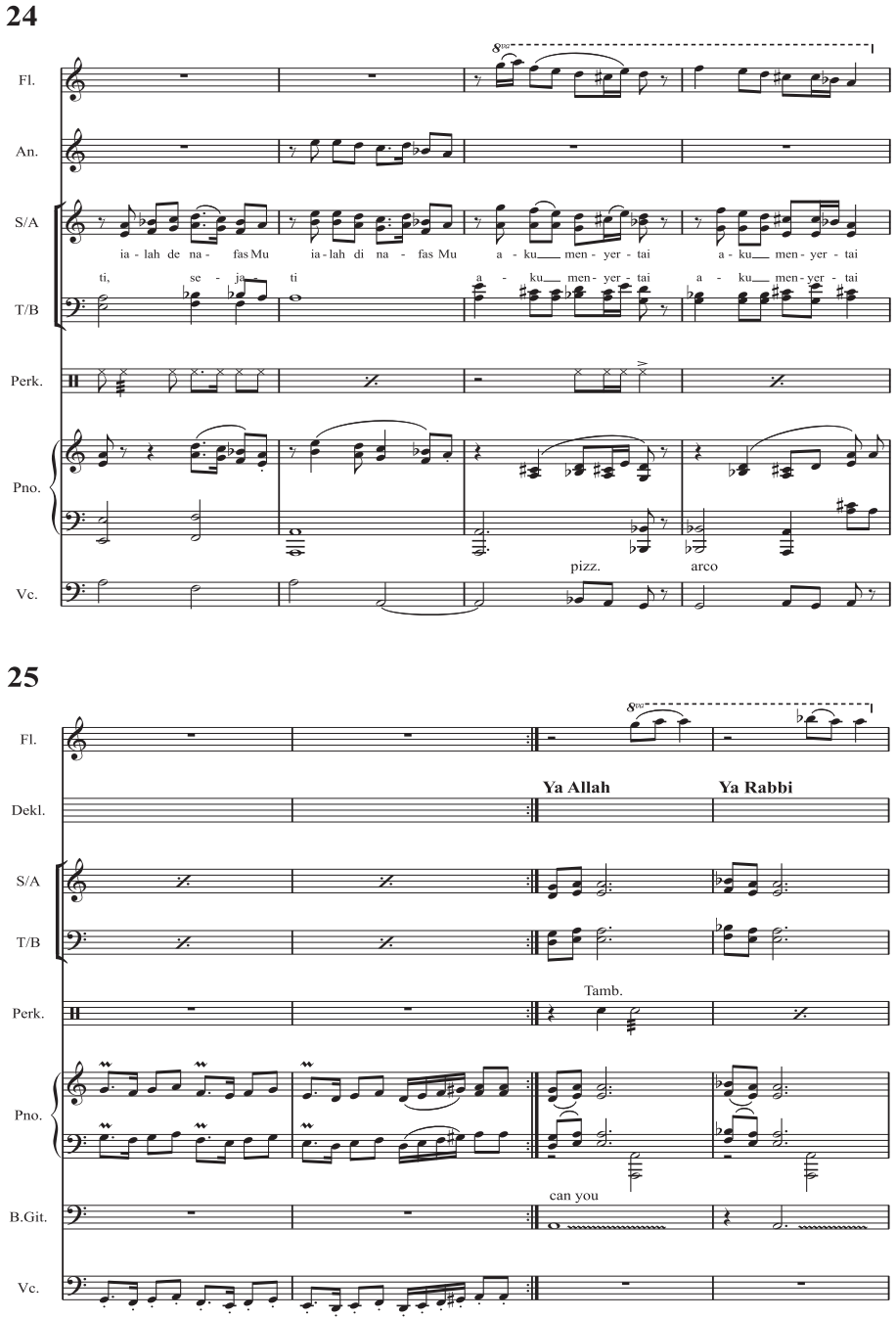


Figure 10.1. Continued

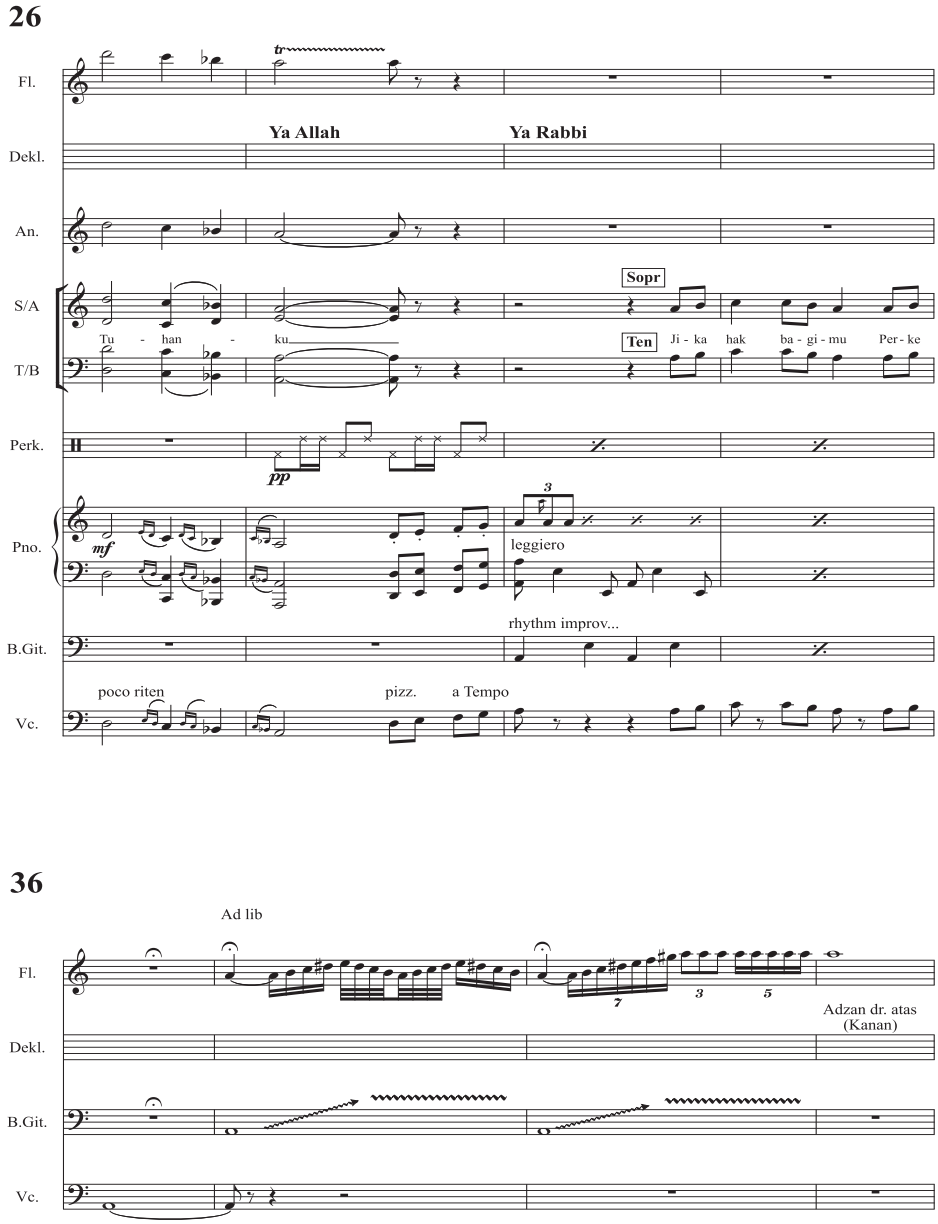
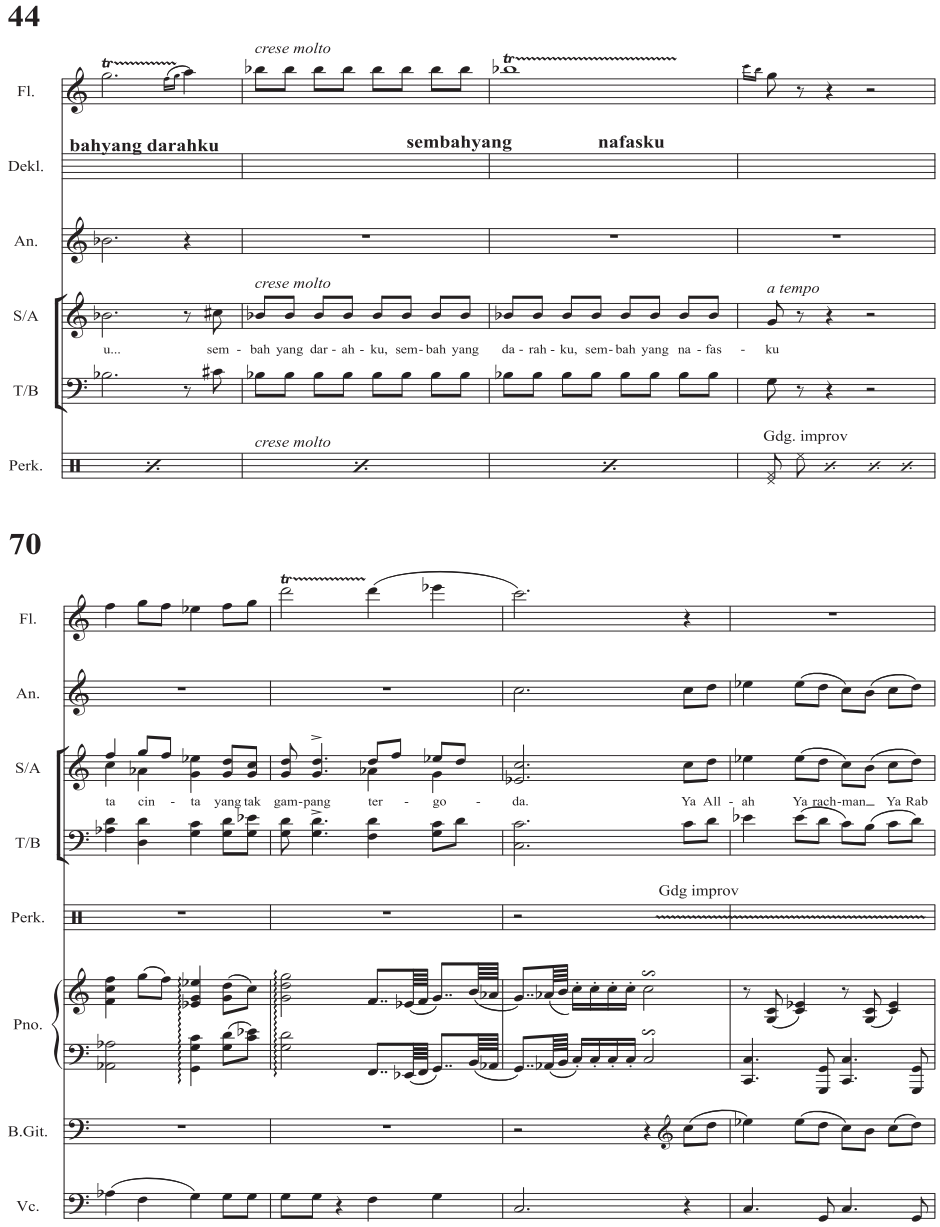


Figure 10.1. Continued



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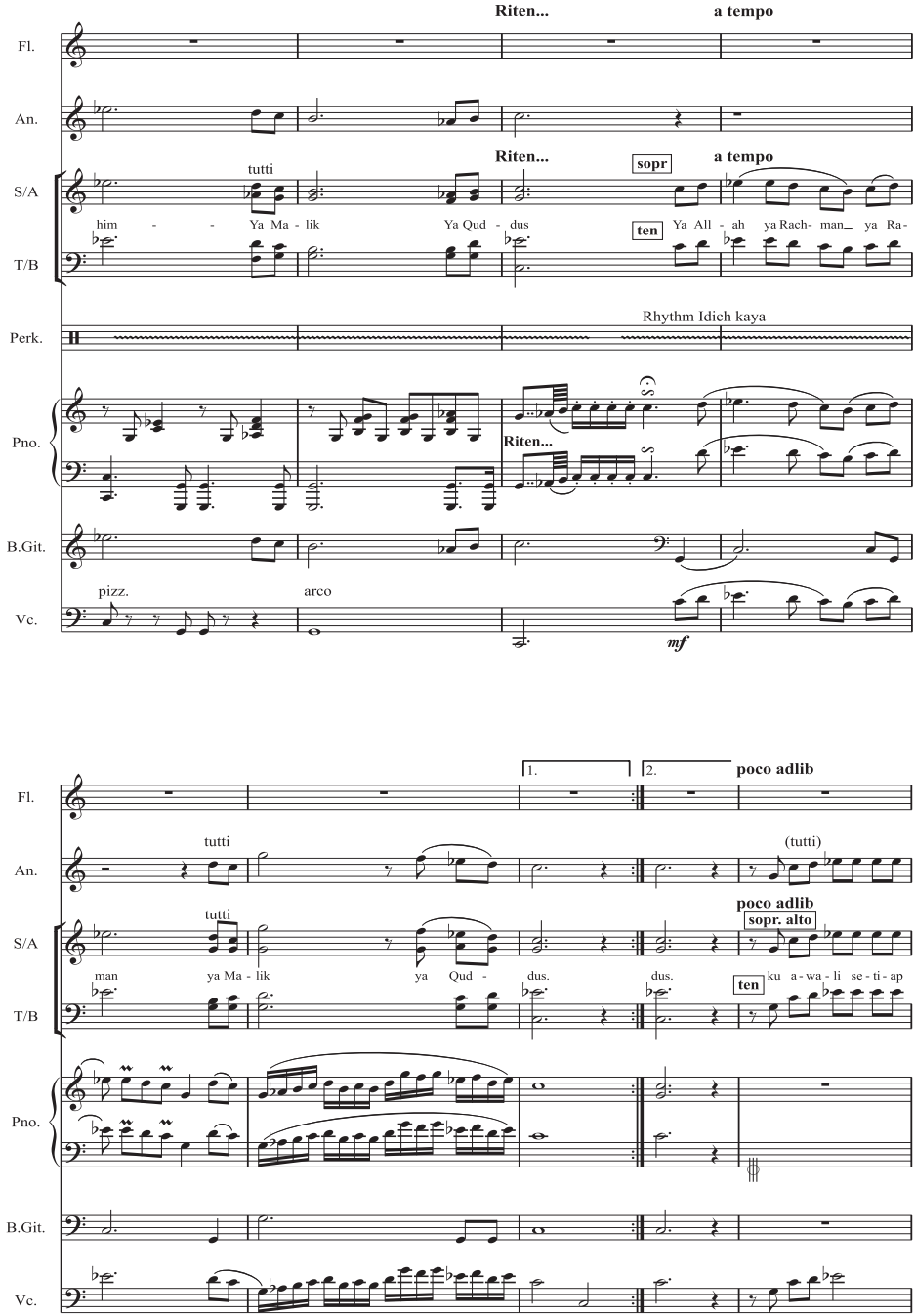

Figure 10.1. Continued

Notes

1. TIM was named after the late Indonesian composer, Ismail Marzuki.
2. I enrolled at IKJ in 1974, majoring in music composition at the Music Department.
3. In 1916, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the pioneer of Indonesian modern music, composed a piece for piano and voice entitled "Kinanthi Sandoong" by employing a pentatonic gamelan scale. In the 1940s, Amir Pasaribu developed this idea extensively in his compositions.
4. I do not place these musical genres within a hierarchy of status as suggested by modernist thinkers such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. As a movie composer who has engaged creatively with various musical genres, I would strongly argue that each musical genre deals with a different issue and ought to be evaluated from its own perspective.
5. Due to the constraint of this chapter, I cannot discuss the roles of many other composers associated with TIM who have also contributed to this issue.

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11

Morality and its (Dis)contents: *Dangdut* and Islam in Indonesia

Andrew N. Weintraub

In this chapter, Andrew Weintraub explicates the multiple positions and debates surrounding Islam and morality as manifested within the spectrum of music and dance of dangdut, *arguably the most popular regional and national music in Indonesian history. The author, a scholar and performer of the style himself, traces the history of this musical genre, a hybrid of Malay, Indian, Arabic, and Western elements. In complement to the historical overview, Weintraub includes invaluable insights from some of the major artists of the form, including its original superstar, Rhoma Irama. While artists like Irama, who became a Haji in the mid 1970s, have crafted the music to serve as a tool of* dakwah *(bringing people to Islam), others have sung about love, relationships, sex, dancing, and having fun. Unlike the genre's pioneering father, the leading* dangdut *artists of the 21st century have been women, including the modern superstar, Inul. Today, thanks partially to modern media,* dangdut *is recognized more for its eroticism and women's bodies gyrating for the male gaze rather than as a medium for* dakwah. *And, as the eroticized version of the style invites intense scrutiny from some particularly vocal political Islamic organizations, the music has been accused of being "porno," helping to encourage the legislation of an anti-pornography bill. Weintraub suggests that the discourse and practice of* dangdut *and its voices and critics—government officials, news media, feminists, religious organizations—are helping to shape meanings about morality in Islam. In his study, Weintraub explores the intersections of the various* dangduts *with the various Islams and explains them through his analysis of historical context, song texts, and musical style.*

What is the nature of music and Islam in a country where Islamic ideas, symbols, and practices are highly diverse and contested? In a country with so many varieties of Islamic ideology and practice, which variants are sanctioned and institutionalized and which ones are marginalized and even prohibited? Traditionalist, reformist, orthodox, moderate? The pluralistic "civil Islam" of

intellectuals, community groups, and NGOs? Regionalized forms of Islam such as that practiced by Gayo highlanders in Sumatra or Sufi mystics in Java? Or, perhaps the many varieties of commercialized Islam mediated through television, radio, cds, the Internet, films, and tabloids?[1]

Clearly, all of these forms constitute Islam in Indonesia, and music plays a role in each one. And yet, in order to understand anything about music and Islam in Indonesia we first have to step back and ask, "Which Islam?" ("*Islam yang mana*?") In this way, we shift the discourse from a way of understanding Islam through its many musical expressions, to a way of understanding how meanings about Islam and their musical expressions are enunciated within specific historical and socio-cultural conditions.

"The music of Islam" (*musik Islam*), "Islamic music" (*musik islami*) or "Islamic musical arts" (*seni musik Islam*), as described in the many examples in this book, can be defined as music of Indonesia with Islamic origins, inspiration, characteristics, or content. In these examples, Middle Eastern texts (musical instruments, styles and techniques, language, and images) have been inscribed within specific music genres of Indonesia. Many of these Islamic genres incorporate Middle Eastern musical elements including non-metric modal introductions, drones, minor scales, the Phrygian mode, augmented seconds, quarter tones, melodic ornamentation, vocal timbre and inflection, and Arabic instruments or sound patches produced on a synthesizer (see also Rasmussen 2005). Further, these examples of *musik islami* utilize Arabic language texts, and performers wear *busana Muslim* or Muslim fashion, clothing styled after that in the Arab world and elsewhere in the Muslim world, and recreate pious-looking scenes in performances and video clips.

A text-based mode of analysis—in which musical instruments, sounds, language, and visual images stand for Islamic religious identity—privileges music of the Middle East as "Islamic." Following the Arabization of Indonesia in language, clothing, and architecture beginning in the 1970s, this view reinforces the homology between "Arab sound" and "Islamic sound" (see Berg in this volume). In this case, the question, "Which Islam?" accompanies longstanding debates about purifying Islam in the country according to practices and perceptions of the Arab world (Arabization), or accepting Indonesian Islam, sometimes referred to as *pribumi* or indigenous Islam, as "quite fine as it is."

In this chapter, I focus on the ways in which people in Indonesia invoke music in social discourses about Islam. I will use the term "Islamic" to refer to ideas, beliefs, values, discourses, and practices identified by Muslims as belonging to the sphere of Islam in Indonesia. I shift the mode of analysis from a text-based approach ("What is Islamic") to an historical and ideological approach

("How does a cultural practice become Islamic?" "When is [a cultural text] Islamic" and "Why is [a cultural text] Islamic"?). This approach shows how notions of Islam become defined in multiple and often contested ways under specific social and historical conditions. I also highlight the ideological stakes in defining what counts as Islamic, especially in debates about morality and music.

My example is *dangdut*, a wildly popular genre of Indonesian music and dance. Mass mediated through radio, television, film, and the Internet, *dangdut* sounds, images, and meanings circulate widely through the mediascape of the archipelago. Performed in streets, bars, nightclubs, stadiums, and at outdoor parties and festivals, *dangdut* has wide public appeal among Indonesian Muslims of different classes, ethnicities, genders, and generations. It is arguably the most widely circulated music of the majority Islamic nation of Indonesia, and generally has little appeal for non-Muslims in the country.

Although some *dangdut* songs have Islamic inspiration, characteristics, or content, *dangdut* is not a genre of Islamic music (*musik islami*). But, it does have material and symbolic connections to Islam that make it important in discourses about Islam and music in Indonesia. *Dangdut* unveils and exposes deep ideological conflicts about morality in contemporary Indonesian Islam. No other form of popular music in this majority Muslim nation has been so clearly defined by sex, eroticism, and women's bodies than *dangdut*. By clarifying *dangdut*'s often-controversial relationship with Islamic ideas, values, and discourse, I aim to shed light on the role of popular music in revealing and framing the boundaries of morality in contemporary Indonesian Islam. In order to work through these issues, I will ask the following questions: How have people used *dangdut* in discourses about morality and Islam? Conversely, how does the discourse and practice of *dangdut* help to shape meanings about morality in Islam?

It is important to note that not all judgments about *dangdut*'s moral character are rooted in Islam. Other interests, namely political and economic, have been deterministic factors in circumscribing the music and its performance. Therefore, I will distinguish between religious, political, and economic dimensions of *dangdut*'s controversial location in Indonesian Islamic society.

Dangdut and its Melayu Roots

Dangdut can be heard blaring out of television sets, radios, and speakers in narrow alleys, public stages, roadside stalls, karaoke bars, stores, restaurants, and all forms of public transportation. Indonesia's most ubiquitous music is also its most hybrid, blending Indonesian lyrics with Indian film music, Arabic popular song,

and American and English rock. Its texts deal with suffering, heartache, and loss as well as with social and political issues.

Although the term "dangdut" was not in place until the early 1970s, the basic elements of the genre began to crystallize in Malay orchestra music (*orkes Melayu*) in Jakarta and Surabaya during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The compositions of this period emphasized the following stylistic elements:

- Indonesian lyrics;
- Middle Eastern- and Indian-derived vocal ornaments;
- Song structure consisting of instrumental intro, A section (possible repeat), B section (possible repeat), interlude, A section, instrumental outro;[2]
- Few chords (usually between three and five);
- "Chalte" rhythmic framework (mimicking drum patterns from Hindi films)[3] played on *gendang* and other percussion (maracas, tambourine);
- Fills, played by the drummer, in accordance with the arrangement of the song;
- Moderate to fast tempo dance pieces;
- Bass lines moving in tandem with the drum rhythm;
- Flute and plucked stringed instruments featured in the interlude sections;
- Lyrics with a narrative quality;
- Themes based on love and relationships;
- Dance movements and costumes linked to film.

Given the strong Indian and Western orientation of the music, its origins in Melayu (Malay) music may be surprising. Yet, since its inception as a named genre of music in the 1970s, *dangdut* has often been classified as a form of Melayu music (*musik Melayu*). The late 1970s recordings of the national music genre Melayu by the national recording company Lokananta are classified as *dangdut*.[4] Even at the beginning of his career, *dangdut* superstar Rhoma Irama insisted on being called a star of "contemporary Melayu music" ("melayu kontemporer") and not a star of *dangdut* (Navis 1976, 16). This grouping together of *dangdut* and Melayu has been strengthened in recent years by the success of the spinoff genre "dangdut Melayu," which received national critical acclaim in 2002.[5]

The concept of Melayu is important for *dangdut* because of the way it has been used to link *dangdut* with Islamic history, culture, and values. Melayu is one of the most fraught and contested words in the Malay/Indonesian language. Melayu refers to "a confusing variety of configurations of human beings, locations, languages, customs, states and objects" (Barnard and Maier 2004, ix).

The term has different meanings in the modern nation-states that constitute the Melayu region (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalamm, and Thailand) (Wee 1985). In Indonesia, Melayu can be defined in terms of ethnic identity, history (dating back to Malacca in the 14th century), geography (a Melayu "culture area"), religion (Islam), language (Melayu or Malay), and specific customs and ceremonies (*adat*) (Yampolsky 1996). The label "Melayu" marks *dangdut* as having a historical connection to a Muslim royal lineage.[6] In published interviews, speeches, and songs about the origins of *dangdut*, *dangdut* superstar Rhoma Irama maintains that the genre originates from or "grew out of" Melayu music of Deli ("Melayu Deli") in North Sumatra.[7]

> I wrote the song "Viva Dangdut," to document the history of the genre (he sings): "Dangdut is the sound of the drum, so lively that it becomes the name of the music [genre]. Melayu music, originally from Deli, influenced by the West and India."[8]

Based on a cultural lineage that extends from the Deli sultanate, through "Malay Orchestras" (*orkes Melayu*) of the 1950s and 1960s, to *dangdut* of the 1970s, Rhoma Irama constructs a continuous narrative around a history of very chaotic and uneven development. Although the influence of Western and Indian music was strong, the Melayu "sense of music" formed the core element in *dangdut*. With this rhetorical move, Rhoma Irama legitimizes *dangdut* by invoking the mythological past of Deli, the site of a 16th century Islamic sultanate, to contextualize the present. Deli is important for understandings of Melayu identity for two reasons: (1) the concern with royal lineage, and (2) the concern for a core culture based in Islam that emerged from an ethnic group with shared ideas, beliefs, values, and symbols (Reid 2001, 304). Rhoma Irama emphasizes the Melayu core of *dangdut* music as a way of placing it into this lineage, which privileges Islam as one of the, if not *the*, defining element of its identity.

But the historical connection between *dangdut* and Islam is more than imaginary or mythologized. *Dangdut* singers who began singing in *orkes Melayu* bands in the 1950s and 1960s and then made the transition to *dangdut* in the 1970s cited their own training in Quranic *recitation* (*tilawa*) as a major factor in becoming skilled *dangdut* singers. Ellya Khadam, Munif Bahasuan, A Rafiq, Mansyur S., Elvy Sukaesih, and Rita Sugiarto all emphasized this point in our interviews. It was not specific vocal ornaments that they borrowed from Quranic recitation but vocal techniques of phrasing, diction, breathing, pronunciation, as well as the ability to memorize and reproduce what they had heard.

Within the context of popular music in Indonesia, it is significant that these major figures cited Quranic recitation as an influence on *dangdut*. This was not

the case with singers in pop Indonesia, *langgam*, or *kroncong*—the other national popular music genres of this period—even though the majority of those singers were also Muslim. *Orkes Melayu* musicians generally were not active in pop, *langgam*, or *kroncong*. Conversely, those who did not receive training in Islamic recitation expressed difficulty in producing the vocal ornaments central to *dangdut* singing (Dangdut, Setelah Halal 1979). Although not a form of Islamic music per se, the *dangdut* vocal style cannot be separated from its roots in Islamic-related music and religious chant.

Rhoma Irama and Dakwah

Musician, composer, record producer, film star, and Islamic proselytizer Rhoma Irama (b. 1947) occupies a central place in the history of *dangdut*. Composer of hundreds of songs and star of over 20 films, Rhoma Irama has been a dominant force in Indonesian music and popular culture since the early 1970s (see Figure 11.1). Using popular print media to defend the genre against claims that

Figure 11.1. Rhoma Irama, center, and his band Soneta, performing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 11, 2008. Bodies of the female back-up singer/dancers are fully covered, and their movements are not considered eroticized. (photo courtesy of Muhamad Ali).

it was backward and unsophisticated, he paved the way for *dangdut* to become Indonesia's popular music.[9]

Comparing his music to the *orkes Melayu* music of the late 1960s and early 1970s, he stated that "they used outdated instruments, their lyrics were shabby and cheaply made. Their lyrics didn't instruct" (Rhoma Irama, pers. comm., July 14, 2005). He felt that music was being used purely as entertainment, whereas music was something exalted, beautiful, and sacred ("Berjuang dalam Goyang" 1989, 18). Rhoma Irama reports that he formed his band Soneta on October 13, 1973, to "fight the satanic impulses in all of us through music" (Ibid.).

After returning from the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1975, he changed his name from Oma to Rhoma ("Rh" stands for "Raden Haji"; *raden* is an aristocratic title and Haji denotes a person who has made the pilgrimage). He strengthened his resolve to turn *dangdut* into a tool for spreading ideas about morality. He felt that music should be used to "give advice about living a righteous life, to encourage religious service, to prescribe how to live" ("Satria

Kalau mau melacur harus pakai uang	If you want a prostitute, you'll have to pay
Kalau mau berjudi harus pakai uang	If you want to gamble, you'll have to pay
Mau mabuk-mabukan harus pakai uang	If you want to get drunk, you'll have to pay
Mau haram-haraman harus pakai uang.	If you want to sin, you'll have to pay.
Ternyata jalan ke Neraka mahal harganya	So, the road to Hell is expensive
Walaupun mahal anehnya banyak yang suka.	Although expensive, many like it.
Melaksanakan zakat hanya bagi yang mampu	Pay alms for those who are able
Melaksakan haji hanya bagi yang mampu.	Take the pilgrimage for those who are able.
Mengerjakan sembahyang tidak usah membayar	To pray you don't have to pay
Mengerjakan puasa tidak usah membayar	To fast you don't have to pay
Ternyata jalan yang ke surga murah harganya	So, the road to Heaven is inexpensive
Walaupun murah anehnya banyak yang ogah.	Even still, it's strange that many are unwilling.

Berdakwah, Raja dari Bawah" 1984, 28), as shown in the following example "Terserah Kita" ("It's up to us"):

In addition to changing the lyrics and music, he made "alterations in hair style (shorter, neatly trimmed), costumes (frequently "Moslem" of an especially exotic Middle Eastern-type), and message (more didactic)" (Frederick 1982, 115). These efforts culminated in the film "Perjuangan dan Doa," ("Struggle and Prayer") described by Frederick as "the world's first Islamic rock musical motion picture" (119).

Rhoma Irama made the urbanized, mass-mediated, and commodified *dangdut* into a form of popular Islam: localized, pragmatic, and performative. He localized Islam by addressing specific social and political concerns in his music. During 1977–82, he became active in Islamic politics as a member of the Islamic Opposition Party (PPP). During this New Order period, the Suharto regime enforced the public separation of religion and state. Rhoma was banned from performing on the state-run television station TVRI (Sen and Hill 2000, 175), and his cassettes were removed from stores. The Indonesian Council of Ulamas (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, or MUI), a New Order organization, protested against his music in the 1970s, claiming that he was selling out the religion.

Indeed, his Islam was pragmatic: He needed to make his music commercial to bring his message to the masses:

> The idea to make *dakwah* songs was considered strange by recording companies and producers. They refused to record *dakwah* songs because they claimed they would not be commercially popular. They said we had to follow the taste of the people who only liked to hear love songs or party music. Indeed, the orientation of cassette producers was to find the largest profit possible. I accepted their position. So we had to make *dakwah* songs that had a commercial goal. If *dakwah* could not attract people in a commercial way, then *dakwah* would not reach the people (pers. comm., October 3, 2008).

Rhoma Irama believed that performances of his music had an important role to play in shaping his listener's sense of morality, and could help to fight against corruption in government; gambling; the use of narcotics; as well as sex outside marriage (pers. comm. Rhoma Irama, July 14, 2005). After hearing his music, he maintains, "drunks would stop drinking, rude people would become pleasant, and non-believers would become believers" (pers comm. July 14, 2005). In the 1990s, he established a second career as a religious teacher (*khotib*) who delivered his message to the people through exhortations, instruction, and sermons (*khutbah*). Like the charismatic preachers that he emulated, he anchored his messages with Arabic quotes from the Qur'an.

Due to Rhoma Irama's prolific output of music and film, and his activities as a religious teacher, *dangdut* is often considered to be a genre of Islamic music. However, Rhoma's contemporaries, including *dangdut* stars Ellya Khadam, A. Rafiq, Elvy Sukaesih, and Mansyur S., did not use *dangdut* as a forum for spreading Islam.[10] Their song texts dealt with male-female love and relationships, including sexual relationships, and the music was meant to be fun and entertaining. The generation of *dangdut* musicians and composers that followed Rhoma Irama turned *dangdut* into a more eroticized and excessive spectacle that challenged ideas about morality rather than propagated a form of Islamic moral order in the public sphere.

Islam, Morality, Dangdut: Political Dangdut

Political Islamic groups in Indonesia have historically denounced individual singers, particular songs, performance practices, and music genres (among other performing arts) because their alleged displays of eroticism are considered to encourage immorality and are therefore unacceptable according to basic tenets of Islam (Foley 1979; Lysloff 2001/02, 4; Weintraub 2004, 57–58).

How does a song or performance style promote promiscuity or threaten Islamic authority? These questions cannot be answered definitively or absolutely because the naming of a practice as pornographic changes depending on context, place, and time. Not surprisingly, there is not an agreed upon list of elements that constitutes what is pornographic, or "porno."

The "porno wars" in Indonesia emerged after the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998. Political democratization, characterized by the development of new political parties and expansion of media, encouraged debate among those groups silenced during the New Order (including feminists, liberal groups, intellectuals, ordinary people, as well as Muslim political groups). However, the gap left by the authoritarian and patriarchal government led to a residual form of the New Order regime, which conflated the private sphere with government (Brenner 1998).

According to scholars both from Indonesia and from outside the country, political Islam "promotes 'Muslim' aspirations and carr[ies] an Islamic agenda into laws and government policy through the electoral process and representative (legislative) institutions" (Baswedan 2004, 670). Many of these so-called official Muslim aspirations focus on women and the performing arts. For example, the controversy surrounding the dancing body of Inul Daratista, and the pronouncement of a *fatwa* against her by the Indonesian Council of Ulamas (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* or MUI) was widely reported in popular print media

and scholarly articles (see below).[11] Other forms of political Islam include the FPI (Front Pembela Islam), an Islamic fundamentalist group that advocates the implementation of *Shari'a* law. Tactics of the FPI include attacking entertainment venues where *dangdut* (and other kinds of music) are played, including bars and nightclubs, brothels, and gambling houses.[12]

In February 2003, a woman's body became the focal point for public debates about religious authority, freedom of expression, women's rights, and the future of Indonesia's political leadership. At the center of these debates was Inul Daratista, a 24-year-old popular music singer/dancer from East Java, whose dancing was described as pornographic and therefore *haram*, forbidden by Islam. The MUI declared that her dancing and costume were circumscribed by its *fatwa* (edict) against pornography, and she was banned from performing in several local venues. Her rise to fame coincided with transformative political events including the 1998 fall of Suharto, the subsequent calls for political reform in the name of democracy, and the ascension of an Islamicist discourse in the public sphere. The story of Inul Daratista came to symbolize the shifting relationship between politics, religion, and the role of women in post-Suharto Indonesia, involving a certain segment of Muslim leadership, moderate political leaders, and ordinary people. As Indonesia moved away from the strong grip of the Suharto regime, new social and political arrangements were played out in *dangdut*.

In 2006, political Islamic groups introduced the so-called anti-pornography bill (RUU-APP) to the Indonesian Legislative Assembly (DPR Indonesia). Under this bill, people would be banned from "disseminating, listening to, staging, or posting writings, sounds or recorded sounds, film or equivalent, song lyrics, poetry, pictures, photographs and/or paintings that exploit the attraction of the body or body parts of a person dancing or moving in an erotic fashion."[13] The bill was tabled in 2006, reintroduced in September 2008, and passed on October 20, 2008.

Numerous accusations have been made against *dangdut* for its "porno" immoral and erotic images and associations. It is worth examining the term "porno" because the parameters of "porno" have not been clearly defined by government officials, Muslim authorities, or social commentators. Islamic groups have labeled *dangdut* singers and performances immoral by citing three specific elements of performance as "porno": (1) song texts; (2) movements; and (3) clothing. Claims that relate to *dangdut*'s moral character are usually directed against women and their performance practice.

Song Texts

In song texts, "porno" refers to (1) the public pronouncement of sex outside marriage; (2) having multiple sexual partners; and (3) unleashing one's sexual

urges rather than suppressing them. For example, in the "porno" song "Gadis atau Janda," a man asks a woman if she is an unmarried virgin (*gadis*) or a woman who has previously been married and is now either divorced or widowed (*janda*). "Gadis atau Janda" portrays a woman—a mother who has many children—who is sexually active, possibly with more than one man. In the last line of the song, after ascertaining her identity as a *janda*, the man proposes that they get "married" ("kawin"). The mood around male-female sexual relations as depicted in "Gadis atau Janda" is playful and fun. It plays on the meaning of "kawin," which can mean "marriage" but can also mean "sexual intercourse" (especially at the end of the song, when it is done with urgency, as in "let's just get married right now!").

"Gadis atau Janda"
(F=female; M=male)

F: Sudah berulang kali aku bermain cinta	F: So many times I've played the game of love
M: Jadi baru abang yang adik cinta	M: But never with me, sweetheart
F: Pemuda yang gangguku semuanya buaya	F: The young men that come to me are all creeps
M: Abang jadi ragu pada dirimu	M: But I'm uncertain about your feelings
F: Masa sih, bang?!	F: Really??
M: Kau masih gadis atau sudah janda?	M: Are you a virgin or not?
M: Baik katakan saja jangan malu	M: It's ok to tell me, don't be ashamed
F: Memangnya mengapa aku harus malu?	F: Why would I be ashamed?
F: Abang tentu dapat 'tuk membedakannya	F: You can certainly tell the difference
M: Kau katakan saja yang sesungguhnya	M: But I want you to tell me
F: Sesungguhnya diriku ah memang sudah janda	F: I'm definitely a divorcee
M: Walaupun kau janda tetap ku cinta	M: I don't care, I still love you
M: Kau masih gadis atau sudah janda?	M: Are you a virgin or not?
M: Baik katakan saja jangan malu	M: It's ok to tell me, don't be ashamed
F: Memangnya mengapa aku harus malu?	F: Why would I be ashamed?

F: Abang tentu dapat 'tuk membedakannya	F: You can certainly tell the difference
M: Kau katakan saja yang sesungguhnya	M: But I want you to tell me
[spoken]	[spoken]
F: Malu, ah!	F: I'm embarrassed
M: Malu ama siapa?	M: Embarrassed by whom?
F: Tapi didengar orang	F: They can hear us
M: Mana? nggak ada orang	M: Where? There's no one else here
F: Itu	F: Over there
M:vmana?	M: Where?
F: Itu!	F: Over there!
F: Kalau janda, masih mau kan?	F: If I'm a divorcee, would you still want me?
M: Tentu dong	M: Of course!
F: Anaknya banyak!	F: I have lots of kids!
M: Ngaak apa-apa. Yang penting kalau saya cinta?	M: That's ok. What's important is that I love you?
[sung]	[sung]
F: Sesungguhnya diriku ah memang sudah janda	F: I'm definitely a divorcee
M: Walaupun kau janda tetap ku cinta	M: I don't care, I still love you
M&F: Marilah segera kita kawin saja	M & F: Let's just get "married" right now!

In the interlude, the singers Elvy Sukaesih and Mansyur S. can be heard cooing, gasping, and laughing as they dance with each other. They create a dialogue about their ensuing love affair. Elvy is worried that they are being watched, while Mansyur S. assures her that no one is around. But, of course, we are all watching. It is considered "porno" because the song brazenly exposes a very public demonstration of this very private moment. It tests the limits of what is socially acceptable, and it confuses notions of public and private space.

Movements and Clothing—Dancing Women's Bodies

Although lyrics sung by men can be considered "porno," the designation of dancing bodies described as "porno" applies only to women performers.

During the late 1990s, videos of bands performing "sensational dangdut" ("dangdut heboh"), "crazy dangdut" ("dangdut edan"), and "sexy dangdut" ("dangdut sexy") flooded local markets, especially in Central and East Java where these styles originated. At these concert events, female singers perform eroticized movements on stage for an audience consisting almost entirely of males. Female singer/dancers are filmed frontally and from low camera angles to emphasize their dancing bodies. Members of the audience are packed tightly toward the stage, and they dance in place, wave their arms, and pass money to the singers or to an emcee. Occasionally, men will come on stage to dance.

Trio Macan ("Three Tigers") is the name of a group (from Lamongan in East Java) as well as a genre. The three girls in the group wear matching tight-fitting costumes and shiny belts with beaded tassels. They do not wear shoes. Each of

Figure 11.2. A female *dangdut* singer, dressed in a tight and revealing costume performing "Dangdut Sexy" in Jakarta, 2008. (photo courtesy of Sandra Bader)

the "tigers" has long hair pulled back by a headband. In addition to standard *goyang pinggul* (gyrating hips) and chest shaking, their act consists of various trademark moves that are considered strong, assertive, and even threatening. Imitating tigers, they crawl on the stage toward the audience. They swing their heads around (in the style of headbanging at heavy metal concerts). From a standing position, they lean back at a 45-degree angle and perform pelvic thrusts in the air. Sitting on their knees and leaning back, they extend their arms all the way back as they thrust or gyrate their hips.

What are the negative social effects of porno *dangdut*? Political Islamic groups have argued that porno lyrics, movements, and clothing encourage social chaos:

Figure 11.3. Ani, a female singer in the Indramayu-based group Puspa Kirana dancing with a guest at a wedding celebration in Brebes, Central Java, December 2009. Note the largely female audience in the background. (photo courtesy of Sandra Bader)

sex outside marriage; a rise in drunkenness and gambling; violence against women; and the breakdown of morals in society. Movements defined as porno reportedly encourage men to do all sorts of things that are beyond their control, including rape. Yet, there has been no clear evidence that shows the negative effects of *dangdut* lyrics and dance movements on people.

Economic effects are more measurable. *Dangdut* producers recognized the critical voices of political Islam as a way to increase sales of their products. Labeling a singer or a song "porno" has palpable effects, including restrictions on television and radio broadcasts or in live performances in certain regions. On the other hand, the label "porno" can lead to greater attention and greater demand. As prohibitions on women's dancing bodies have increased, their movements have become more eroticized and their outfits more revealing. In post-Inul Indonesia, almost every *dangdut* band can provide a group of sexy dancers for weddings and circumcisions. So, it seems that the "porno" wars have stimulated rather than curbed the public appetite for eroticized bodies in both regional performances and national media.

Women's voices have received comparably little media coverage in these debates, which does not mean that they are absent. Female *dangdut* singers whom I interviewed were outraged at the censure heaped on artists by authoritarian and patriarchal institutions and individuals. Taking a broader view of women's performance, women performers felt that male spectators, not female singers, should be held accountable for producing negative effects. Women's groups have argued that the rising number of rape cases is due not to the spectacle the media has made of public dancing bodies, but rather to the inability of the legal system to protect women from the widespread violence against them. It is important to note that feminist groups were not involved in drafting the RUU-APP bill. Feminist activists, in fact, took a public stance against political Islamic groups that introduced the anti-pornography bill for (1) criminalizing victims of pornography; (2) failing to distinguish children from adults; and (3) allowing people to take the law into their own hands (Khalik 2008).

Conclusion

Although not *musik islami*, *dangdut* has enlivened debates about the nature and meaning of Islam. First, it is rooted in Islamic-related Melayu popular music of both pre- and post-independence Indonesia. Second, the creators of the *dangdut* style emphasize their training in Quranic chant as an important element in producing characteristic *dangdut* vocal ornaments. Third, *dangdut* has been used as a tool to communicate religious messages (*dakwah*) about leading a proper Muslim life. Fourth, it has been increasingly attacked for being offensive to Islam.

Rooted in Islamic-related musical genres, and functioning both as a form of Islamic proselytization and public eroticized dance, *dangdut* has become a privileged site for understanding the role of popular music in debates about Islam and morality in contemporary Indonesia. These debates are productive as power in defining the contours of what counts as Islamic in Indonesian society (Foucault 1980).

In this chapter, I have examined the ways in which the texts, performance, and discourse about a form of popular music help us to understand how moral boundaries are shaped and policed in contemporary Indonesian society. *Dangdut* reveals the increasingly important intersection between politics and religion. Labeling texts and movements as "porno" and calling for bans on certain performers affect people's ideas about what is morally acceptable in public and what must be relegated to the private sphere. Censorship establishes the ground upon which power and authority take root and grow.

I have clarified *dangdut*'s historical, musical, and often controversial relationship with Islamic ideas, values, and discourse. These examples show how meanings about Islam get defined in multiple and often contested ways in Indonesia; they constitute different "ways of knowing" Islam (Horvatich 1994). Furthermore, these examples illustrate the ideological tensions and contradictions that characterize Islamic society at this point in history. What constitutes "Islamic"—which Islam?—is historical, shifting, unstable, and always dependent on the conditions of its social and discursive production.

Notes

1. An excellent introduction to the many "voices" of Islam in Indonesia (and other parts of Southeast Asia) is Fealy and Hooker 2006.

2. *Dangdut* song structures vary, but they generally have an instrumental intro, two different melodic sections, an interlude, and an outro. Refrains can be added. In contrast to pop Indonesia, which are songs generally composed in the 32-bar AABA song form, *dangdut* songs have variable lengths. *Dangdut* song forms can be 48–52 bars including intro, melodic sections, interlude, fills, and outro.

3. The *chalte* rhythmic pattern (also spelled "calte"), played on the *gendang*, is one of the most distinctive elements of *dangdut*. This pattern was present in *orkes Melayu* of the 1950s. The *chalte* pattern is similar to the *kaherva* (*kaherawa*) 8-beat rhythm often used in Indian film music (Manuel 1988, 211). But, the origin of the *chalte* pattern cannot be determined with any certainty. It resembles drum patterns not only of India (Ibid.), but also Malaysia (Chopyak 1986, 123; Simatupang 1996, 40–45) and Cuban-based music (Munif Bahasuan, pers. comm. July 16, 2005).

4. Yampolsky 1987, 13 states that the term "Melayu" refers to two distinct genres: regional Melayu music from north Sumatra and national Melayu music. *Dangdut* is part of the latter genre.

5. In 2003, *dangdut Melayu* singer Iyeth Bustami from Riau received an award as the best female *dangdut* singer for her 2002 album "Laksmana Raja di Laut" ("Kembali ke Akar Melayu" 2003). The album signaled recognition for *dangdut Melayu* or *zapin dut*, a type of regional *dangdut* that incorporates rhythms of *zapin*. Arranger Mara Karma, also from the island of Riau, received the award for best arranger, and singer Hamdan ATT won the best male singer award for a Melayu song "Patah Kemudi" (Ibid).

6. This definition of "Melayu" is based on Reid 2001, 304.

7. The terms "Melayu," "Malay," and "Maleis" are often used interchangeably and in confusing and contested ways, as discussed in following paragraphs.

8. Rhoma Irama, pers. comm., July 14, 2005. Song lyrics from the song "Viva Dangdut" are: "Dangdut suara gendang, Ditabuh-ditabuh berulang, Dangdut suara gendang, Sekarang ramai menjadi sebutan. Ini musik Melayu berasal dari Deli, Lalu kena pengaruh, Dari Barat dan Hindi."

9. For more about Rhoma Irama's biography, see Frederick 1982.

10. A few songs do make reference to Muslim images, ideas, and meanings, but they are not considered *dakwah*. For example, in the song "Child of an Islamic Pilgrim" ("Anak Haji"), the daughter of parents who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca falls in love with the son of a gambler. The song "Qais dan Laila" tells the tragic love story of a commoner and a princess and takes place in the Middle East. The video for the song shows clothing and architecture of the Middle East.

11. Scholarly sources include Weintraub 2008; Heryanto 2007; van Wichelen 2005; and Faruk and Aprinus 2003. Also, see a brief review in the Introduction to this volume.

12. FPI leader Habib Muhammad Riziek Syihab was arrested in June 2008 following an FPI attack on an interfaith rally in Jakarta.

13. Translation of RUU-APP by Aviva Kariningsih Cohen and Matthew Isaac Cohen.

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Epilogue

Judith Becker

This groundbreaking volume on Islamic music in Indonesia includes 11 essays, each dealing with vastly different musical genres associated with Islam. Several themes recur in these essays, including (1) the increased emphasis, particularly in the last two decades, on a global, rather than a local, style of Islam; (2) tensions between traditionalist and modernist approaches to music and Islam; (3) the prominence of women involved in musical genres associated with Islam; and (4) the aestheticizing of early Islamic genres, now sometimes staged as cultural performances. *Aestheticizing*, admittedly an awkward term, refers to the practice of performing rituals for a public audience, and in the process, often adapting them to conform to modern or Western ideas concerning timing, tuning, and choreography. This process of turning rituals into staged spectacular events, often for competitions and open to non-locals, is found worldwide, but seems particularly remarkable in Indonesia.

Since the 1990s, musical genres associated with Islam have become the focus of a national debate. This discourse is driven by a concern for the particular form of Islam that should dominate in Indonesia. Some musical genres are associated with global Islamic traditions (*burdah, qasidah rebana, hadrah, zikrzamman*), others with Middle Eastern culture (*orkes gambus*), and others with the perpetuation of older, mystical forms of Islam, sometimes associated with the nine *walis*, which nowadays may be associated with various forms of Sufism (*brai*, *pencak silat, meu-seukat*). Still other genres pre-date Islam, but have assimilated some aspects of Islam into contemporary performances (gamelan genres, *wayang kulit*). New genres have also emerged, especially in the area of pop music (*dangdut*, *nasyid*, and *lagu-lagu sholawat*), or as modernist, hybrid fusions (the groups Debu [Dust] and ath-Thawaf [freely translated as "the search for truth"], the piece

"Persembahan," [translated as "A Worship"]). The field is wide, the discourse diverse. The essays of this volume all reflect this new reality.

From an outside perspective, this focus on music and the performing arts as a catalyst for the debate concerning the shaping of the ethos of Indonesian Islam may seem surprising. But, it represents a modern-day incarnation of a focus on artistic expression as emblematic of larger societal concerns that is very old in Indonesia. The linkage of performance arts and religion did not begin with the arrival of Islam on Indonesian shores. Pre-Islamic performance genres such as *wayang* and gong-ensemble traditions were linked to dominant religious ideologies as well as serving as symbols of secular authority. We know that Tantric Shaivism and Tantric Buddhism, often called "Hindu-Buddhist" in the scholarly literature, encouraged participation in music and dance as vehicles to attain a deeper spirituality (Becker 2004). While the Shaivism and Buddhism of pre-Islamic Java were imported from India, the performance genres were not. The linkage of religion and performance art may well predate the time when Tantric Shaivism and Tantric Buddhism were dominant in Indonesia.

In the light of this history, it is not surprising that the semi-mythic, 16th century sages, the *wali sanga*, believed to have first propagated Islam in Indonesia, did so through performance genres. In this volume, many of them are mentioned. Sunan Kalijaga used the gamelan *sekaten* to promote Islam in Central Java (Sumarsam). Sunan Kudus created *wayang golek* (Sumarsam). Sunan Praben introduced Islam into Lombok along with *wayang sasak* (Harnish). Sunan Gunung Jati developed local arts to promote Islam in West Java (Pätzold). Sunan Panggung was a patron saint of performing artists and is sometimes credited with originating *brai* (Cohen). Sunan Giri, Sunan Kudus, Sunan Walijaga, and Sunan Bonang are credited with the renewal of *wayang* (Sumarsam).

Thus, from its inception in Indonesia, Islam was associated with performance arts. The kind of Islam of the *walis* and the dominating form of Islam for many successive centuries was strongly influenced by Sufism. Beginning in the 19th century, continuing throughout the 20th century, and greatly accelerated in the past decades, pressures increased within Indonesia to mold Islam to become more conservative, less heterodox, and more closely resembling Arabic, specifically Egyptian, models. One result has been the introduction, or the increase in the frequency of performance, of genres based upon Middle Eastern models; other newcomers are in the category of pop musics. At the same time, many of the older genres of music that are now associated with Islam either predate Islam or are associated with the early Sufi missionaries and their attempts to convert the populace. These highly syncretic, assimilated genres have come under attack by conservative clergy and other religious fundamentalists. Simultaneously, there is a "push-back" movement that defends locally based, assimilated, or hybrid

Islamic musical genres. Even modernist Indonesian Muslims may be emotionally attached to old Islamic musical traditions of their own region, and may resist top-down condemnation by conservative clerics associated with national institutions.

These tensions and countertensions are reflected in the discourse surrounding musical genres that span the continuum between those acceptable to the most conservative clerics, to those that are questionable, to those that are disapproved by conservative clerics. All these gradations have stimulated the public debate and provoked attempts to develop a classification system for Islamic musics. No single system commands broad consensus. Nonetheless, locally developed categories of Islamic musics offer insights into the dimensions and polarities of the debate. One such system, referenced several times in these essays and thus included here, is to divide these musics into two groups: (1) *musik Islam* (Islamic music), and (2) *musik islami*, (music influenced by Islam, or music with Islamic characteristics]).

An essay by Deni Hermawan (2000), the written version of his paper for a seminar titled "Dialektika Musik Islam" (1999), wrestles with the ambiguities of these terms and comes up with a useful summary of the ways in which *musik Islam* may differ from *musik islami*. According to Hermawan, *musik Islam* can be characterized by the use of (1) Arabic *maqam* system of scales, (2) Arabic language, (3) Arabic instruments, (4) Middle Eastern rhythms, (5) Middle Eastern vocal quality, (6) Islamic dress, and (7) an etiquette of presentation, by which he means such things as sitting on the floor, or with a minimum of bodily movement (i.e., a decorous, refined presentation).

Within Hermawan's central category of *musik Islam* are those genres that are pan-Islamic and imported from abroad, including *qasidah* (praise poetry), *sholawat* (songs in praise of the Prophet), and *barzanji* (stories about Muhammed and his sayings). (The *adzan* [call to prayer] and reading of the Qur'an, while musical, as in the Middle East are not considered "music").

According to Hermawan, *musik islami*, on the other hand, may not necessarily involve any of his list of characteristics for *musik Islam* (except for decorous presentation), but must include Islamic themes in the lyrics and not be purely instrumental. Like all natural language categories, the *musik islami* classification system leaks, (i.e. it works for central, iconic genres, but is more problematic for those on the boundaries) (Lakoff 1987).

The phrase *musik yang bernafas Islam*, or *musik yang bernafaskan Islam*, variants of which appear frequently in these essays, can be translated as "music moved by the spirit of Islam," or more literally as "music that breathes Islam," or "music with a breath of Islam," or "music invigorated by a breath of Islam." "Breathing Islam" provides an alternative description with a poetic vagueness that seems

appropriate to the many genres of music that are associated with Islam, but that are not *musik Islam*.

It is the *musik islami* genres, or those that breathe Islam, that may provoke controversy, inspire debate within the intelligentsia, may be condemned by orthodox clerics, and often have deep traditional roots and reflect the layered history of Islam in Indonesia. Even though the essays in this volume only discuss genres on four of Indonesia's 17,000 islands, they still reflect the impressive range of Indonesian religious musics that can be called *musik Islam* and *musik islami*, or that in some way "breathe Islam."

Sumarsam

The volume begins with an essay, "Past and Present Issues of Islam within the Central Javanese Gamelan and Wayang Kulit," written by Sumarsam, one of the most prominent teachers of gamelan in the United States. Gamelan and *wayang kulit* predate the coming of Islam to Indonesia, and yet these genres reveal aspects of assimilation to the changing religious climate. The Central Javanese *wayang* and court/conservatory gamelan traditions are not, as a rule, considered to be genres that "breathe Islam."

Yet, even pre-Islamic genres like gamelan and *wayang kulit*, seemingly off-the-charts in terms of the *musik Islam/musik islami* dichotomy, have absorbed Islamic elements and Islamic doctrines, without overt resistance, in a totally organic, unselfconscious, evolutionary way. The outsized gamelan *sekaten*, played at central Javanese courts for the celebration of the birthday of Muhammad, is believed to have been instituted by Sunan Kalijaga (one of the *walis*) to encourage conversion to Islam. As Sumarsam points out, Muslim influence was a two-way street, what he calls an "Islam-Java ideological/philosophical hybrid" in reference to gamelan and *wayang* traditions. Indonesia was not the first to promote the idea that beautiful music and dance can be a method to disseminate Islam. But, while this is also a Sufi doctrine, the idea of using the arts as a way to popularize belief was already well established in Indonesia before any Sufi missionaries arrived. Thus, Indonesian embrace of the conjoining of music and religion only strengthened newly introduced Sufi beliefs concerning ritual and the performative arts.

Sumarsam designates the gradual stylization of puppet figures, becoming further and further removed from a natural representation of the human figure, as an "intangible transformation," defined as a process in which elements from the "imposing culture" are indirectly transformed to blend with those of the "receiving culture." A recent example of tangible transformation described by Sumarsam is the insertion of "Shalawat Badar," a praise song to the Prophet,

accompanied by frame drums, into the middle section of a *wayang kulit* performance.

Sumarsam gives abundant literary examples of the integration of gamelan, dance, and *wayang* performances into the lives of devout Muslims of the 19th century. He also describes how 19th century *terbangan* ensembles included frame drums, were associated with Islam, and played melodies shared with the gamelan repertoires. Sumarsam contrasts this kind of cultural interchange between pre-Islamic genres and early Islamic genres with the rise, in the 20th century, of Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah with reformist agendas far less tolerant of the easy syntheses emblematic of the early years of Islam in Indonesia. For example, local music and dance traditions are no longer closely integrated into the curriculum of Muslim *pesantren* boarding schools as they were in the 19th century. Sumarsam asserts that, by the end of the 20th century, however, Muhammadiyah softened its opposition to the conjoining of arts and Islam.

Sumarsam views the continual adaptation between traditional arts and Islam as an ever-evolving, natural, mutual process of adjustment.

Harnish

In the second essay, "Tensions between *Adat* (custom) and *Agama* (religion) in the Music of Lombok," David Harnish paints a very different picture concerning general attitudes toward pre-Islamic and early Islamic musical genres than does Sumarsam. In Lombok, the lines of debate and of contention are clearly drawn; the traditionalists, the moderates, are losing. Strict, orthodox Islam is increasingly held to be the only Islam. Musical and theatrical genres that incorporate pre-Islamic or earlier Sufi beliefs of Lombok may no longer officially be classified as religion (*agama*—divinely revealed), but customary practices of culture (*adat*—humanly generated). Increasingly, *musik Islam* dominates *musik tradisional*, increasingly categorized as *adat*. *Musik tradisional*, including such genres as *wayang kulit* and gamelan traditions, while historically associated with popularizing Islam in Lombok (as in Java), are not (as in Java and elsewhere in Indonesia) considered *musik islami*.

For example, the Lombok variant of *wayang kulit* uses stories involving the Islamic hero, Amir Hamzah, and would thus seem to be in the category of *musik islami*. However, the use of gamelan instruments, gong cycles, spiritual asceticism and other Hindu aspects are deemed inappropriate for the transmission of Islam. Rather, it is the genres comprising *musik Islam* such as *zikrzamman* (a variant of *dhikr)*, *barzanji* (sung texts about Muhammad and his sayings), *burdah* (hymn singing while playing *rebana* drums), *qasidah burdah* (prayers and praise singing),

and *hadrah* (similar to *zikrzamman*) that are officially sanctioned. *Zikrzamman*, *burdah,* and *hadrah* are associated with Sufi practices in vast parts of the Muslim world, although the term "Sufi" is not acknowledged in Lombok. Nonetheless, the orthodox Muslims of Lombok seek religious expressions that reflect a global, universal Islam rather than a localized, syncretic Islam. (Sufi-inspired, *dhikr*-like genres, such as *zikrzamman* and *hadrah,* may not be accepted as *musik Islam* in other parts of Indonesia, as in Kartomi's essay.)

One strategy of the government is to take the *tradisional* arts out of context and aestheticize them, thus neutralizing them as a focus for religious practices. To some extent, *musik Islam* genres have also become cultural spectacles. Staged competitions and organized performances for locals and tourists are effective methods for making the *tradisional* genres essentially irrelevant in terms of religion. For the performers of staged traditional arts, whether *musik Islam* or *musik tradisional*, these performances have become secularized and may no longer be pathways for spiritual development. The youths energetically beating sets of *bedhug* (drums associated with the mosque) on the back of a truck while cruising through town on state holidays are perhaps more likely hoping to impress young women than seeking inner spiritual enrichment.

Harnish places these developments in Lombok as having gradually taken place since the colonial era, through post-independence, and after the fall of the Suharto regime (1998), as Lombok society became increasingly orthodox, increasingly conservative, and more hostile to pre-Islamic musical genres.

Rasmussen

The essay by Anne Rasmussen, "The Muslim Sisterhood: Religious Performance, Transnational Feminism(s), and the Particularity of Indonesia," highlights the role of women in Indonesian Islam, particularly in relation to Quranic recitation. Rasmussen, like Sumarsam, discusses the two largest Muslim organizations, Muhammadiyah (the more conservative group) and Nadhlatul Ulama (the more liberal group), but from the perspective of a scholar of Middle Eastern Arabic traditions. Indonesian Islam, even in its orthodox forms, is generally more liberal, especially in its attitudes toward women, than is Middle Eastern Islam. Rasmussen underlines the paradox that it is the "traditionalist" organization, Nadhlatul Ulama (NU), rather than the "modernist" organization, Muhammadiyah, that is most receptive to women's participation in Quranic recitation and in Islamic performances in general. She points out that the culture within the traditionalist organization, Nahdhlatul Ulama, includes acceptance of the veneration of saints, visitation of graves, ritual meals to promote harmony (*selamatan*), identification

with the nine *walis*, and acknowledgment of a mystical approach to Islam—all of which hark back to early Islamic practices in Indonesia and elsewhere. However, both Muhammadiyah and Nadhlatul Ulama promote (or do not prohibit) women's participation in religious learning, the reading of religious texts, and the public performance of religious texts.

Rasmussen introduces us to her main consultant, Maria Ulfah, a national authority with an international reputation who, like many star reciters in Indonesia, has acquired celebrity status. Rasmussen describes one public performance of Quranic recitation by Maria Ulfah in which she demonstrates her power as both performer and educator by explaining first to the audience the seven different styles of recitation, thus publicly assuming the role of a pedagogue. Then, in her performance, she progressed through a number of Arabic modes, in Egyptian style, for a 24-minute performance covering a range of nearly three octaves, thus displaying her impressive skills. Rasmussen asserts that, while the activities of Muslim women in Indonesia resonate with feminist movements in other areas of the global Islamic world, the prominence of women in Islamic rituals is not something that is necessarily new or imported, but rather reflects ancient Indonesian mores.

Rasmussen concludes her essay with a discussion of the attempts within Indonesia by some modernists who would like to reform the long-established traditions of the participation of women in public Islamic performances (see Kartomi). It is her belief that the easy acceptance of women in religious practices and the tolerance for mystical versions of Islam, practices with deep historical roots in Indonesia, will not be overturned in spite of the ascendancy of a more orthodox, more Arabic Islam that has characterized Islam in Indonesia in recent decades. The "Muslim sisterhood" in the title of her essay resonates both with a universal model of feminist movements within global Islam, as well as to the particular ways in which Indonesian female Muslims may live their religious lives, fully engaged in community Islamic rituals, and in the public performance of sacred texts.

Cohen

In his essay, "*Brai* in Performance: Devotion and Art in Java," Matthew Cohen addresses a different aspect of the public performance of ritual than does Harnish. *Brai* falls into the category of an old, Sufi-influenced, early Muslim religious performance. While the staged ritual performances of *musik tradisional* in Lombok are decontextualized and aestheticized, the *brai* groups that Cohen describes, even when performing in public venues, *are* seeking spiritual enrichment. As in

many Sufi traditions around the world, music and dance are recognized "as paths to divine unity and expressions of belief." The word *brai* means "to feel passionate about," specifically referencing sexual passion. Within *brai* practice, the passion refers to the two-way love of God and humankind. The loss of self in love for the divine, expressed in *brai* texts, is a common trope in Javanese mystical literature/poetry from the 16th through the 19th century.

Contemporary *brai* consists of singing accompanied by frame drums and clapping. Texts express an "intense awareness of mortality … urging repentance while there is still the opportunity to do so in this world." In the 19th and 20th centuries, Central Javanese practitioners of *brai* were described as indulging in ecstatic, whirling trance dances and possibly sexual practices that were scorned by the upper-class literati who wrote about them. Contemporary *brai* groups do not dance. Cohen suggests that these accounts were "based on partial knowledge, ideological prejudice, and perhaps fantasy," and were part of an ongoing movement to suppress syncretic, Sufi-derived religious practices in Java and encourage conformance with a more conservative, orthodox Islam. Thus, Cohen indicates that the attempts to suppress early Islamic genres, while intensified in the past century, have a long history.

In the 1970s, like the *musik tradisional* groups discussed by Harnish and the female sitting dance, *meuseukat*, discussed by Kartomi, *brai* groups around Cirebon became part of a government-supported effort to promote local culture. Along with renovating palaces, collecting manuscripts, and invigorating the *batik* industry to reproduce old patterns, *brai* was rediscovered or reinvented as a Cirebonese cultural treasure. One particular *brai* group, from the village of Bayalangu, became a tourist destination, ultimately resulting in performances in Bandung, West Java, and in the capital, Jakarta, as well as in other Indonesian cities and at cultural festivals. But, while they are treated as a performance group by the government, as thus *artists*, they do not think of themselves that way, but rather as devotees of their faith, *brai*. The group performs in public at sacred shrines and sacred cemeteries. Also, private performances occur regularly at their home shrine without any audience at all. Thus, while externally the public *brai* performances would seem to be decontextualized and thereby spiritually inert, for the performers themselves, their beliefs and rituals are intact.

Pätzold

In his essay, "Self-Defense and Music in Muslim Contexts in West Java," Uwe Pätzold describes the conjoining of self-defense, music, and Islam to point to another particularity of the musical practices of Islamic Indonesia. *Pencak silat*,

the self-defense genre referred to here, is, for its practitioners in West Java, simultaneously a sport, an art, and a spiritual exercise. The intent is to discipline body and mind and thus open the possibility for spiritual development. This practice has been traditionally associated with the *pesantren* (the traditional Islamic boarding schools, mostly in rural areas). But now there are more secular variants, independent of the Islamic schools, as well as forms that are taught in the national educational system that is officially non-denominational.

In earlier times, *pencak silat* was believed to be used to attract followers to Islam (*dakwah*). Within traditional *pesantren* schools, complete control over the physical body was also believed to lead to invulnerability, a pre-Islamic belief associated with Tantrism, now only somewhat integrated within limited Islamic contexts.

Pencak silat, even though historically associated with *pesantren* schools, falls into the *musik islami* category and thus may be suspect within modernist Islamic circles. There is no one-to-one relationship between one genre of *pencak silat* and one kind of musical ensemble, nor is there a one-to-one relationship between one genre of *pencak silat* and ritual usage. This variability of use among the many genres of *pencak silat* would thus seem to make more complex the decisions concerning the appropriateness of any one variant.

As would be expected, the ensembles most closely associated with Muslim ritual contexts are those based on frame drums (*terbang*) and ensembles based on the single-headed barrel drum, *bedhug*, the drum formerly used to announce prayer times. The frame-drum ensembles feature monophonic or responsorial singing with repertoire drawn from *sholawatan* (praise songs), thus placing them in an acceptable category. But the repertoire may also include regional songs, and may use West Javanese tunings (*laras salendro, pelog, sorog/madenda*), thus placing them in a more suspect category.

A third ensemble genre that accompanies *pencak silat*, but without the strong association with *pesantren* culture, includes those forms that feature the double-headed *gendang/kendang* drum, do not include singing, and in which the melodic part is carried by the end-blown aerophone, the *tarompet*. Thus, these ensembles would not, according to Hermawan's system of categories, fall within *musik islami*. To complicate issues of acceptability, *gendang/kendang* ensembles may appear within some religious contexts, while in a strictly secular context the same ensemble may play erotically tinged repertoire from the genres *jaipongan* or *ketuk tilu*.

Pätzold concludes by observing that as they are increasingly the object of suspicion by followers of modernist Islam, the *pencak silat* genres associated with the *pesantren* culture are morphing into genres to teach self-discipline, rather than as vehicles for spreading and propagating Islam.

Capwell

Capwell's essay, "From 'Dust' to Platinum: Global Currents through the Malay World of Musical Islam," introduces yet another aspect of music in Indonesia associated with Islam (i.e., popular music). His essay is a meditation on the implications of an unlikely pop music phenomenon in Indonesia, the group Debu, comprised of American and European Sufis who are now expatriates living in Jakarta. Their premiere album (2003) became one of the Indonesian Top 10. They continue to produce hit records and draw tens of thousands to hear their concerts. The leader of this Sufi community of expatriates, Shaykh Fataah, an American ordained by an Albanian *shaykh*, had a vision and heard a voice whispering "*Indonesia*" while living as an expatriate in the Dominican Republic. An Internet search led to a Muslim organization in Sulawesi, and in 1999, he and his followers moved to Sulawesi where they provided remedial training in Islam at the Sulawesi branch of the Islamic University of Indonesia. While there, this community of Sufis began singing sessions with simple accompaniment to attract and inspire their students. Thus, the group began promoting Islam in Indonesia in the same way as did the nine *walis* centuries earlier. After two years, the community moved from Sulawesi to the capital, Jakarta.

As Sufis, the whole group is involved with musical religious practices. But, when they reached Jakarta and had access to high-quality recording studios, experienced engineers, and studio musicians, the better players among the group, led by the *shaykh*'s son, Mustafa, became the core recording and performing artists. Mustafa has eclectic musical tastes drawn from various world musics, and thus represents what Capwell describes as "a musical instance of the deterritorialized imagination." It is Capwell's contention that for the youth of Indonesia, the presence in their midst of a highly popular and acclaimed group of Muslim musicians who are not only foreign, but also non-Middle Eastern and non-South Asian, opens up imaginary possibilities for their own lives. Capwell also makes the point that such eclectic and multi-national musical groups, in whatever contexts, also present new challenges to ethnomusicologists more accustomed to study localized, territorially bounded musicians and their audiences.

Within the context of this volume of essays, Capwell's contribution adds a new dimension of complexity to the sampling of Islamic musics in Indonesia. The music of Debu is neither *musik Islam* with clear roots in the Middle East, nor one of the genres that have adapted and changed under the influence of Islam, nor one that has been reinterpreted within an Islamic ideology. The songs of Debu, rather, serve to emphasize the international aspects of a global Islam that is not Middle Eastern, but includes the United States as well. This may be a central aspect of their popularity.

Berg

The essay by Birgit Berg, "Authentic Islamic Sound? *Orkes Gambus* Music, the Arab Idiom, and Sonic Symbols in Indonesian Islamic Musical Arts," yet further ambiguates the *musik islami* category.

Berg begins by explaining that the ensemble genre, *orkes gambus*, has clear roots in Middle Eastern cultures, uses the *maqam* system and Arabic instruments, and is "frequently broadcast nationally on Islamic holidays, performed during religious events, and sold commercially under the rubric of religious music in record stores and street markets." O*rkes gambus* is categorized as *musik islami*, and yet is regarded "by some as entertainment music not suitable for performance within religious contexts and best *left confined to boisterous Arab-Indonesian celebrations held in urban Arab quarters*" (italics mine). Within ethnic Arab-Indonesian communities, who trace their ancestry to Hadramaut, Yemen, *orkes gambus* is primarily entertainment music with secular love songs as texts, while *orkes gambus* within the general Indonesian community is often associated with ritual contexts. Youth groups associated with mosques may form *orkes gambus* groups and accompany *orkes gambus* dancing, often associated with specific Muslim calendrical holidays and appearing on national television. Despite its many religious associations, and despite the fact that *orkes gambus* includes instruments and may include musical styles associated with the Middle East and thus *bernafaskan Islam*, *orkes gambus* does not, for some, clear the bar as *musik islami*. *Orkes gambus* may be considered as entertainment music—too fast, too loud, and too boisterous to be taken seriously as religious music.

Conversely, high prestige accrues to sounding Arabic in Indonesian popular music. Berg stresses the important role of Arabic aesthetics in Indonesian popular music as an indicator of authenticity and, ultimately, religiosity. Thus, simply looking Arabic and sounding Arabic helps *orkes gambus* remain (generally) within the domain of *musik islami*. Furthermore, the incorporation of Arabic aesthetics such as dress, instruments, texts, performance presentation, and musical styles also helps Indonesian musicians and their audiences establish a global identity that is not Western. Arabic-derived ensembles—even if not particularly Islamic—allow for an alternate model of a modern, internationalized identity.

Berg illustrates how a genre such as *orkes gambus*, though derived from a Middle Eastern context, over the course of centuries has evolved and adapted to its Indonesian contexts and become richly diverse in its meanings. Berg asserts that the ambiguous attitudes toward *orkes gambus* ensembles reflect larger tensions regarding religious music in the country as a whole, a theme repeated and expanded by Weintraub.

Van Zanten

In the opening paragraphs of his essay, "The Discourse on Islam and Music in West Java, with Emphasis on the Music Group, Al Thawaf, van Zanten states that many artists and intellectuals in West Java (Sunda) reject the Arabic dichotomy of *halal* (allowed)/*haram* (forbidden), but are more interested in discussing aesthetic values (e.g. Abdul Hadi, Abduk Mun'im, Rahmat et al., Hermawan, Enoh, Suharno). These artists and intellectuals advocate the integration of local cultures and histories into contemporary Islam, and are thus ideologically aligned with the supporters of the suppressed genres of Lombok (Harnish), the diminished genre *brai* (Cohen), the reinvented genre *meuseukat* (Kartomi), and religious *pencak silat* (Pätzold). Furthermore, van Zanten indicates that pre-Islamic trance rituals and mystical practices are often at the core of these discussions. The artist/intellectual circle prefers an "indigenous Islam" that reflects local history rather than a global, universalist Islam.

The focus of his article, the pop group, ath-Thawaf, is led by Yus Wiradiredja, head of the music department of the Bandung academy for dance, theatre, and music. The 15 to 20 group members are almost all affiliated with the Bandung academy as faculty or students. Yus Wiradiredja was born into a musical family and learned to play the West Javanese zither, *kacapi*, and to sing the classical West Javanese repertoire when he was a child. Solo singing in Sunda has been used to propagate Islamic teachings since Islam first entered the interior of West Java in the 16th century (see Cohen). With his affiliation with ath-Thawaf, Yus Wiradiredja wanted to create fusion music that would reflect both his regional traditions and global Islam, *musik etnik Islam*. The modernity of Yus Wiradiredja is apparent not only in his association with one of Indonesia's official conservatories and his concern with an international Islam, but also in his discourse about himself as an "artist" (*seniman*), a term that came into currency at the national music conservatories in the late 1960s.

The recordings of ath-Thawaf include Sundanese musical instruments such as *kendang* (drum), *gambang* (xylophone), *suling* (bamboo flute), and *kacapi* (zither), and make use of the Sundanese *madenda* or *sorog* tonal systems. But, they also include newly constructed instruments, non-Sundanese rhythmic patterns, choral multipart singing, and strophic forms. The texts are religious, and the musicians wear Islamic dress. Blending genres of different regional musics of Indonesia and regional musics with Western idioms has been pursued in the arts academies since the 1960s, but the self-conscious blending of local traditions with global Islam is a more recent development (see Notosudirdjo), and it indicates the involvement of modernist artists, as well as other intellectuals, in the ongoing public discourses about the role of the arts and Islam in Indonesia.

Kartomi

Like the chapter by Rasmussen, Margaret Kartomi's chapter, "'Art with a Muslim Theme' and 'Art with a Islamic Flavor' among Women of West Aceh," focuses on female performers and, in particular, the *meuseukat* sitting dance. *Meuseukat* involves a row of kneeling women who sing while accompanying themselves with body percussion. These performances take place at informal celebrations and to welcome guests.

Kartomi points out the Sufi roots of spiritual exercises that include unison body movements accompanied by frame drums, or, as a substitute for drums, body percussion. Variants of these practices, a form of *dhikr*, are widespread in Indonesia (see Harnish), and elsewhere in the Islamic world.

Depending upon whether the texts are drawn from Muslim liturgy or from secular sources, *meuseukat* is considered either as worship or as entertainment. As with so many Islamic genres discussed in this volume, religious *meuseukat* is believed to have originated as Islamic outreach, or *dakwah*. Both variants of *meuseukat* are in the category *musik islami*, in this case called *kesenian islami* (art with an Islamic flavor), even if the texts are about love or politics. Both the confession of faith that often opens a performance and the history of *meuseukat* as an instrument for the propagation of Islam lend an aura of acceptability. Still, some clerics oppose any performances with secular texts. Thus, as in several of these essays (see Harnish, Cohen, and Pätzold), Indonesian genres that are rooted in the early days of Indonesian Islam, and thus associated either with Sufi missionaries or pre-Islamic expressive forms, are a source of ambivalence and anxiety among sections of the populace, and especially among conservative clergy.

In the 20th century, *meuseukat* suffered a dramatic decline that was reversed in the 1970s due to the convergence of (1) Indonesian governmental efforts to identify and promote regional expressive forms, and (2) the intervention of a woman, Ibu Cut Asia, with a passionate desire to revive and modernize the genre. Her troupe, with its lively choreography, became the model for many newly established troupes that perform at festivals, formal governmental affairs, and national tours, even spreading to groups outside of the province of Aceh and to diasporic Acehnese communities abroad.

Kartomi, like Harnish and Cohen, describes the ways in which a performing art form, *meuseukat*, was co-opted during the Suharto era for political purposes. The national government funded performing groups who would use newly written propaganda texts for use during election campaigns, at official welcoming ceremonies, national-day celebrations, and provincial festivals. Some *meuseukat* performances were shortened, secularized, and made faster (i.e. aestheticized for general public consumption) (see Harnish).

The public debates over Muslim expressive forms in Aceh have largely excluded women. But, as Kartomi points out, they vote with their bodies by their continued, determined participation in all forms of performing arts.

Notosudirdjo

The essay by Franki Notosudirdjo, "Islam, Politics, and the Dynamic of Contemporary Music in Indonesia," addresses the issue of musical modernity and Islamic modernity through a focus on two compositions by the female composer, Trisutji Juliati Kamal. He points out a disjunction between the rise of religious modernism, such as the establishment in 1990 of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), and musical modernism exemplified by the Jakarta Arts Center (TIM), a center for the propagation of contemporary, modernist arts founded in 1968.

Trisutji Kamal, who studied composition at the Amsterdam Conservatory until the early 1990s, subscribed to a Western model of musical modernity that incorporated gamelan scale systems and Indonesian folk songs into Westernized composition (see van Zanten). After returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca, she turned her attention to "Islamic musico-religious elements" in her compositions. This led to the composition of "Persembahan" (A Worship), written in 1992 for flute, two narrators, two Quranic chanters, solo soprano, mixed choir, percussion, a set of Sundanese drums, a set of *rebana* frame drums, piano, bass guitar, acoustic guitar, and violincello.

The first performance took place during a festival of modern art music at the Jakarta Theater Hall affiliated with the Jakarta Arts Center. The audience, urban and sophisticated, would have been familiar with the modernist conception of a concert hall and the behavior considered appropriate for such a venue. The performance was apparently very well received.

Three years after the performance of "Persembahan," another work by Trisutji Kamal was performed at a cultural night for members of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) and their families. The piece was entitled "Penghayatan Bulan Suci" (Revelations of the Islamic Month). While this audience, also urban and middle class, was modernist (i.e., conservative) in its political and religious agenda, it was not modern but rather traditional in its approach to cultural events. It is customary at traditional performances for the audience to display sporadic attention to the performance while often carrying on conversations, walking about, eating snacks, and for nighttime performances, taking catnaps as well. The audience for Trisutji Kamal's work acted like a traditional audience and "from the beginning to the end engaged with themselves, chatted throughout the performance, and produced a huge unintended noise as 'accompaniment' to

the music." As Notosudirdjo comments: "This group of new modernist Muslim intellectuals still obviously perceives an art event as a social gathering rather than a modern autonomous cultural practice." He stresses the disjuncture between those who perceive modernist Islam as a purely sociopolitical project, and those who relate modernist Islam with modernist music (those composers who are members of ICMI but also associated with the Jakarta Arts Center and its modernist artistic agenda).

This chapter exemplifies the point made by other authors represented here (Berg and Weintraub) that the turn to Islam and the Middle East presents to Indonesian artists a form of modernism that is not dependent upon Western models, and thus more compatible with contemporary Indonesian ideologies.

Weintraub

Andrew Weintraub's essay, "Morality and its (Dis)contents: *Dangdut* and Islam in Indonesia," focuses on the discourse surrounding the popular genre *dangdut* as revealing ideological conflicts concerning music, Islam, and morality in contemporary Indonesia. *Dangdut* is arguably the most popular form of music in Indonesia. He points out the paradox that while *dangdut* creators emphasize their training in Quranic chant and the form has been used as a form of *dakwah*, no other form of popular music "has been so clearly defined by sex, eroticism, and women's bodies."

Weintraub traces the roots of *dangdut* to the hybrid music of the *orkes Melayu* ensembles of Jakarta and Surabaya in the late 1950s and early 1960s that included ABA forms, Western harmonies, and Middle Eastern- and Indian-derived vocal ornamentation and whose texts were primarily love songs. However, Rhoma Irama, the most popular singer of *dangdut*, writes lyrics with a distinctly religious tone. Rhoma Irama formed his band in 1973 expressly "to fight the satanic impulses in all of us." He felt that music could shape morality, fight corruption, as well as combat drugs and help prevent extra-marital relationships.

During the 1970s and 1980s, when the Suharto regime enforced the separation of religion and government, both Rhoma Irama, as a member of the Islamic Opposition Party (PPP), and *dangdut* became symbols of resistance against a deeply corrupt and autocratic regime. Because of the continued popularity of Rhoma Irama and his Islamic mission, *dangdut* retains the impression of being a forum for the spreading of Islamic cultural values.

On the other hand, Weintraub points out that many of Rhoma Irama's contemporaries, including some *dangdut* stars, feature secular texts (love songs meant only for entertainment), and that the following generation of *dangdut* performers abandoned all religiously inspired aspirations and transformed *dangdut* into "a decadent and excessive spectacle."

Modernist Islam advocates in the 1980s and 1990s have labeled many *dangdut* female singers and songs as "porno," defined as "immoral and erotic." In 2006, an anti-pornography bill (subsequently rejected but reintroduced and passed in 2008) was introduced into the Indonesian Legislative Assembly. Under the mandate of the bill, "disseminating, listening to…sounds or recorded sounds,…song lyrics, poetry,…that exploit the attraction of the body or body parts of a person dancing or moving in an erotic fashion" were banned.

According to Weintraub, the paradoxes and contradictions found within the genre of *dangdut* make it a rich field for Indonesian discourse and debate concerning the shape, the dimensions, the morality, or the ethos that should characterize Indonesian Islam. He asks the question, as do the editors in the Introduction, "Which Islam?" Weintraub's provocative essay forms a fitting close for this volume.

Cumulatively, these 11 essays, affirmed by the Introduction, delineate the multi-shaped plurality of the musical genres associated with Islam, and thus the various interpretations of Islam within Indonesia. They highlight the importance of musical genres in the Indonesian conception of religion and the body politic, and how deeply discourse about music and Islam has become central in Indonesia in recent decades.

Islam is increasingly important as a marker of Indonesian identity, both internally and to the outside world. The headscarf (*jilbab*) was rare in Indonesia in the 1960s, and is now ubiquitous. Indonesians who were formerly casual in terms of religious observances, now may pray five times a day and make serious efforts to undertake the Hajj. Newspapers in the West continually reiterate the fact that Indonesia has more Muslims than all the Middle Eastern countries combined. In academia, more universities in the United States are realizing the need for a professor of Indonesian/Southeast Asian Islamic Studies.

Music in Indonesia, as it always has been, remains centrally linked to religious faith. And thus, musical genres associated with Islam have risen in prominence in terms of performances, in the public mind, and in the political discourse. As Indonesian citizens struggle to determine the ethos of how to be a Muslim within a Southeast Asian context, of how to relate to Middle Eastern Islam, and of how to shape Indonesian Islam, musical genres offer a variety of templates and suggest multiple possibilities.

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Glossary

Adat	traditional custom, etiquette, and ritual, often connected to spirituality
Adzan (or adhan)	Muslim call to prayer
Agama	religion, specifically a major world religion
Amir Hamza	an Arab protagonist and uncle of prophet Muhammad, who appears in theater, especially in the Serat Menak tales used in the shadow play of some parts of Java and Lombok
Angklung	shaken bamboo rattle, often used in sets and in ensembles
Barzanji	written stories about the prophet Muhammad and his life
Bedhug (or bedug)	large barrel drum earlier used in mosques for the call to prayer; this tradition continues in a few areas of Indonesia
Bernafas Islam	lit. to breathe Islam; often a phrase for a music style that connotes or promotes Islam
Centhini	a significant Javanese text describing the coming and spreading of Islam, written in the 18th to 19th centuries
Dakwah	Indonesian word from the Arabic, *da'wa*: call, appeal, bidding, demand, request, convocation, summons, missionary activity

Dangdut	a popular music style based on Hindi films and "Malay" bands, alternately associated with *dakwah* and staged female sexuality
Demak	an Islamic kingdom (c 1475–1548) on the north coast of Java important in the early development of Javanese ensemble music
Dhalang (or dalang)	puppeteer, particularly for shadow puppet-theater, often considered spiritually powerful
Dhikr (or dhikir, dzikir, zikr)	remembrance of God; repetition of God's name or a short formula repeated over and over in ritual chant to remind humans of God, normally associated with Sufi or mystical practices
Gambus	the Arab style lute or *'ud*; also a style of Arab-derived instrumental and vocal music, which, although features popular texts, is often heard in Islamic contexts
Gendang	a cyclindrical drum similar to the Javanese kendhang. Also, a set of two drums, modeled somewhat on the North Indian tabla, in dangdut
Genjringan	a type of frame drum ensemble used within village processions in such places as Cirebon and Garut
Hadith	the "sayings" or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad
Haji/Haja	one, male/female, who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca
Halal/haram	permitted/forbidden; judgmental categories from the Arabic applied to activities, things, and arts
Hikayat	Arabic for stories, refers to Malay literature recounting heroes and royal chronicles
Kendhang (kendang)	a cylindrical, double-headed drum, particularly a Javanese drum used in the gamelan
Kyai	religious and civic leader, usually the director of a boarding school or *pondok pesantren*
Lontar	palm leave inscription; early literature was written on *lontar*

Madrasah (also madrasa)	A.; in Indonesia, a modern Muslim school
Maejlis Taklim	group or gathering of women for social, civic, and educational purposes
Mahabharata	the Indian Hindu epic adapted for Indonesian literature and theater
Majapahit	the storied Hindu Javanese kingdom (c 1293-1500), often romanticized as the pinnacle of Hindu-Buddhist Indonesian/ Javanese culture
Majelis Ulema Indonesia (MUI)	National Council of Muslim religious scholars
Maqam s./maqamat pl.	Arabic, melodic mode(s) used for recitation, various kinds of Islamic music and the call to prayer
Mataram	a powerful, independent sultanate (c 1500s-1700s) in Central Java crucial in the development of Javanese gamelan; an earlier Hindu empire of the same name existed in the area from the late 6th century to the early 10th century
Maulud (Maulid, Maulid Nabi)	the birth and celebrations of the prophet Muhammad
Muhammadiyah	socio-religious organization in Indonesia; associated with Islamic modernism
Musik Islam	the music of Islam, for example music used in Islamic rituals
Musik islami	music influenced by Islam in spirit, context, or content
Nadhlatul Ulama	large socio-religious organization, associated with traditional values and tolerant of native Indonesian traditions; lit. the awakening of religious leaders
Nasyid	from the Arabic *nashid* or *nasheed*; a style of unaccompanied group singing found in Arabic-speaking countries that has become a distinctive pop style in Southeast Asia; also referred to as *acapella*, from the Italian term for singing unaccompanied by instruments, a cappella
Orkes gambus	lit. *gambus* orchestra; see *gambus*

Orkes Melayu	lit. Malay orchestra; style of music from North Sumatra that combines Arabic and Indian elements; also related to the popular music style *dangdut*
Pancasila	five principles of the modern Indonesian nation
Pelog	an Indonesian parent scale with modal functions; consisting of a total of seven tones, the scale is often performed in one of several pentatonic forms
Pencak silat (or silat)	Indonesian self-defense/movement art
Pesantren/pondok pesantren	Indonesian, Islamic boarding school
Qasidah/qasidahan	religious poetry/singing songs of praise about the life of the prophet either a cappella or with light percussive or chordal accompaniment
Ramayana	the Indian Hindu epic tracing the life, trials, and victories of the hero, Rama, adapted to Indonesia in literature and theater
Rebab	two-string bowed lute used in Javanese and Sundanese gamelans
Rebana	Malay-Indonesian, frame drum of various sizes, also *terbang*
Rudat (also rodat)	a dance or movement art of men associated with theater and song (as in Lombok) or with self-defense (as in West Java)
Santri	residents at a *pondok pesantren*; Geertz' category (1960) for devout followers of Islam
Sekaten (or gamelan sekati)	a large Javanese gamelan with courtly and Islamic associations
Serat Menak	the cycle of Persian tales used in some styles of theater in Java and Lombok featuring Amir Hamza, the uncle of the prophet Muhammad
Shari'a	Islamic law and jurisprudence
Shaykh/syekh	religious leader/master, often a charismatic *tarekat* leader
Sholawat (also, salawatan, slawatan)	religious songs, usually in praise of the prophet Muhammad, often in Arabic

Slametan (or selamatan)	shared ritual meal, typical of Javanese culture
Slendro (Sundanese: salendro)	an Indonesian parent scale of five tones with modal functions, performed in up to three pentatonic forms
Sufism	often glossed as the mystical path of Islam, Sufism, sometimes considered the first style of Islam in Indonesia, is often in alignment with normative practice, but sometimes discards normal piety for group singing and chanting in attempting to achieve direct communion with the divine; "Sufis" are often held to have historically used the performing arts to popularize Islam
Suluk	a didactic and moralistic work sometimes used in Javanese mysticism written in poetic forms of the song-genre, *macapat*
Sunna	the traditions of the prophet Muhammad
Tassawuf	Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam
Terbang/terbangan	frame drums/ensembles of frame drums that may accompany sung poetry (*suluk*) or self-defense arts
Tarekat	Muslim brotherhoods often associated with Sufism and/or with *pesantren* and engaged in the performance of *musik Islam* forms
Tarompet	a wooden double-reed aerophone of West Java
Tilawatil Qur'an	the recitation of the Qur'an
'ud	an Arabic lute often held to be the model of the Indonesian *gambus*
Ulama (or ulema)	religious leader or teacher from the Arabic 'alim with no distinction made between Arabic singular and plural forms
Umma	Muslim community in an area (town, nation, world); a factor in early trade networks, today *umma* connects diverse individuals globally

Wahhabism	an ardent form of Islam developed within Saudi Arabia sometimes promoted within Indonesia
Wali sanga (songo)	the nine saints credited with spreading Islam in Indonesia, especially in Java
Wayang golek	Sundanese puppet-theater featuring three-dimensional wooden puppets usually using stories of Islamic origin, the Serat Menak cycle of stories.
Wayang kulit	Javanese shadow puppet-theater accompanied by gamelan ensemble
Zafin (or zapin)	a Yemeni-derived dance performed with *gambus* music in Malaysia and parts of Indonesia

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